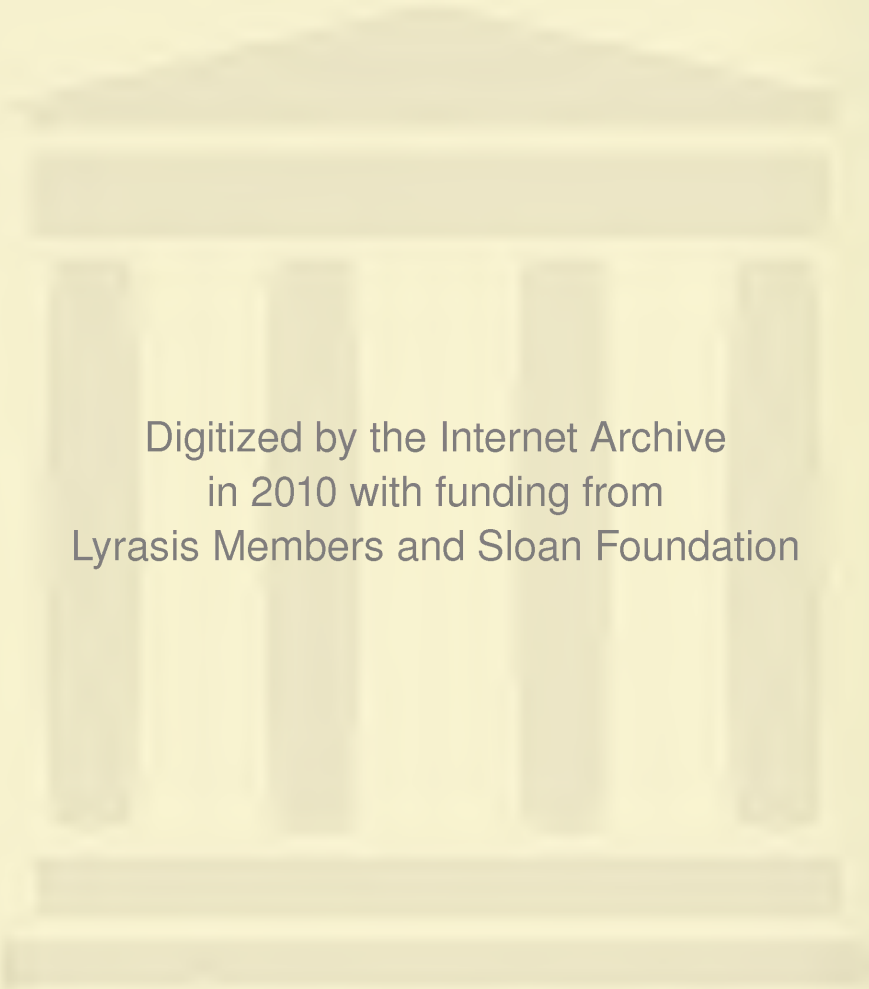


●●○○ *Four
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CONTRIBUTORS

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Editor: JOHN J. KEENAN
Associate Editor: JOHN P. ROSSI
Editorial Assistant: KIM DORAZIO

Desktop Publishing Specialist: Steve Durfee
Editorial Assistance: James Butler; Gabriel Fagan, FSC; Howard Hannum;
Vincent Kling; Barbara Millard; John Rooney; John Seydow

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JOE COOGAN

Confessions of a Semi-Sissy

In two hours I was going to get beaten up. The beating would be delivered by Tommy DeVito, the toughest kid in the eighth grade, and would take place on the wide vacant lot across the street. The spectators would include most of the boys in the school, a few of the girls and several men who, in that depression year of 1935, lived nearby in the "scratch house," an abandoned Baldwin Locomotive factory that had been converted into a shelter for the homeless. (Would most of them be ventmen today?)

There was no uncowardly way I could get out of the fight, even though I'd done nothing to provoke it. That morning the nuns had marched us out to attend some religious service at the church about four blocks away. DeVito and his partner were walking in front of me and mine. In back of us a tall dumb kid named Brannigan snickered, leaned over my shoulder, and swatted DeVito on the back of the head. DeVito turned to me, stonefaced, held up one hand like a claw, and hissed. Just that. Didn't say a word. I've never been more scared.

In those days in that poor neighborhood in downtown Philadelphia (Would it be called a ghetto today?) I spent a fair amount of time avoiding occasions of fright. I was, I confess, a semi-sissy. I had no taste for "macho" confrontations with individuals or

gangs from outside the neighborhood eager for physical debate about some obscure territorial claim. When one of those outsiders tried to take away my movie money I managed to outrun him. I always did my homework. I sang in the choir. I was the school's spelling champion. All this was the "sissy" part. The "semi" part was that I played a fair game of pickup football and baseball; the larcenous outsider, if he'd been able to catch me, would have had a hell of time getting the money; and, when this class was over, I would—God help me—drag myself, doomed and trembling, to the place of execution. I had to do it. If I didn't, life would have become unbearable.

That afternoon I felt so alone, so companionless, my scarred wooden desk could have been a cell in solitary. My classmates' occasional curious glances and the nun's droning lesson seemed part of a distant ritual—a mass for the dead. DeVito, who sat four seats ahead of me, seemed nonchalant, unconcerned, as if nothing had happened. For a moment I had the giddy hope that nothing *would* happen. After all, we were far from being enemies. We'd played football together a few times. We'd exchanged jokes. But we were also far from being close friends. I'm not sure Tommy any longer had close friends in the class. During the past year he had become in some way a lot older than the rest of us. He'd begun to be accepted in his big brother's crowd. They sometimes paid him to act as lookout when they ran a poker game, and one of them was teaching him how to drive. As I



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looked at DeVito I realized that, although he had a temper of dried kindling, he must know by now that I'd never be stupid or mean enough to do what Brannigan had done. Of course he knew. It made no difference. He'd beat the hell out of me. He had to.

The lot we fought on was bordered by narrow streets on three sides and, on the fourth, by the backs and yards of row houses. (Would they be "town houses" today?) DeVito lived in one of them. The lot's earth was sandy brown speckled with bright green weeds and a scattering of empty cans and bottles that glittered in the afternoon sun. We would fight in a large but flexible space enclosed by lines of spectators who would break ranks when need be; for the fight was likely to move swiftly back and forth.

From the moment I put up my fists (Would we be using other weapons today?) the fight was a disaster. DeVito's face appeared briefly before me, slid to one side, and I was hit twice on the chest. I backed away. A fist glanced off the right side of my head. I stumbled toward DeVito, punching wildly, and he buried a hand in my gut. I fell face down. My mouth was covered with dirt. Kneeling, I bent my body forward and balanced myself on my hands. With gentle contempt DeVito put a foot to my ribs and pushed me over. "Attababy, Tommy!" someone yelled. "Show him who's boss!"

I wasn't badly hurt. But my customary and carefully cultivated caution told me not to get up. That way, the fight would

be over. DeVito was letting me off comparatively easy, and why shouldn't he? The son of a bitch had no reason to hit me at all. Humiliation clouded reason. I got up and DeVito, smiling broadly, slapped my face. Slapped. Didn't punch. Then something happened there's no accounting for. Something that never happened before or since.

The world became dark. Pitch black except for what seemed a sliver of moonlight on DeVito's face. We were the only two people in the universe, and with an almost savage sense of freedom, I determined to kill him. I swung at that moonlit face and felt my fist hit the corner of his mouth. I'm not sure what happened after that. I'm pretty certain he "won" the fight, for he hit me many more times than I hit him. But I doggedly followed that hated face as it floated in the dark ahead of me, and once I hit it squarely on the chin and DeVito, startled, jumped back and his foot landed on an empty bottle and he went sprawling to the ground.

"Stop it! Stop it! Stop what you do to my boy!" DeVito's mother, who had been enjoying the fight from her backyard, came surging through the line of spectators.

For the few weeks of school left, Tommy DeVito and I ignored each other. Helped by scholarships I went away to prep school and college. On my infrequent visits home I saw fewer and fewer of my old classmates as most of them acquired jobs, wives, and children. Then came the war, much of which I spent in



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Honolulu writing scripts for the Armed Forces Radio. (Typical semi-sissy job.)

In the summer of '46, a few weeks after I got out of the Army, I saw Tommy DeVito again. I was standing on the front steps of my parents' house and I noticed him, a block away, walking towards me. He looked thinner than I remembered.

"Hey, Tommy," I said as he drew near, "how's it going?"

"It goes, it goes. You just got out, huh?"

"Yeah. I was in Hawaii most of the war. Where were you stationed?"

He looked at me quizzically.

"In Philly. Up on Fairmount Avenue."

"Sounds like pretty nice duty."

"See you around."

Then I remembered that up on Fairmount Avenue, spread across several blocks, stood the Eastern State Penitentiary, a maximum security prison. Later someone told me Tommy had served time there for taking part in a bank robbery. (He had driven the car.)

I went on to lead a successful semi-sissy life in a semi-sissy suburb with a semi-sissy wife and kids. I had almost forgotten about Tommy DeVito until a few months ago when I read the death notice in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Age 65. "Long illness." (Cancer?) "Survived

by brothers Raymond and Francis." (Bachelor).

But I've never forgotten the world's turning dark and the exultantly lawless savage I had briefly become. A madman. I should, I suppose, be ashamed of him. But, the world being what it is, I confess that I feel comforted knowing that he makes his home someplace inside me. You never know when you might need him.

○○○○

TAMARA S. CORNELISON

A Letter from Kiev

In Kiev last summer I wandered into the headquarters of RUKH, the Popular Movement of Ukraine, the largest and most effective of the new political parties that have sprung to life in the Ukrainian S.S.R. since Mikhail Gorbachev first introduced perestroika and glasnost. RUKH had begun as a grassroots movement and had grown in strength and numbers as the democratic bloc's answer to the Ukrainian Communist Party, much like the Solidarity Movement in neighboring Poland.

Like all of Eastern Europe, Ukraine was beginning to experience an awakening of national consciousness and RUKH had become the strongest catalyst in the move toward sovereignty and autonomy. It was RUKH that had initiated the move to re-establish Ukrainian as the official language of



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Ukraine and it was RUKH that had hoisted the blue and yellow Ukrainian flag above the city council building in Kiev and in other cities throughout Ukraine where only the previous year the red Soviet flag had flown as a symbol of Moscow's unquestioned authority.

I had come to RUKH headquarters hoping to gather some good material for articles that might be of interest to assorted editors in America. In pursuit of information, I met a young RUKH volunteer named Mykola. We chatted about this and that and discovered to our mutual delight that we had a friend in common, a woman I had grown up with in Philadelphia whom he had met the previous year when *she* had wandered into RUKH headquarters. We went to lunch and then he took me around to all the newspaper and magazine offices within walking distance and waited patiently while I talked with editors and journalists about their work and about the acute paper shortage that was plaguing the newly liberalized Ukrainian press.

Late that afternoon, Mykola decided that we should have dinner. I assumed that we would go to another restaurant, but he led me to a telephone and called his wife and announced that he was bringing someone to dinner. He told her to start cooking as we would be there in about a half hour. Up till that point I had considered Mykola a rather fine fellow who was accommodating and pleasant and interesting company. The phone call infuriated me and I felt a genuine sympathy for the poor wife who was being ordered to cook for some

stranger brought in, quite literally, off the street.

Like the women who had participated in the takeover of the administration building at the University of California at Berkeley in the late sixties, I was of a mind that "free women do not cook" on demand. I made sure that Mykola was fully apprised of this viewpoint as we walked to the small apartment he and his wife Tamara and daughter Darusia shared with his parents and a younger brother.

The parents and the brother were our of town, visiting relatives in the countryside. Tamara, an attractive and very pregnant brunette, greeted us at the door of the apartment. Her condition added to my discomfort, especially when she insisted that Mykola and I sit at the only two chairs at the kitchen table while she served us the fried potatoes and onions that she had prepared for our dinner. No amount of protesting from me could make her take one of the two chairs. She and two year old Darusia stood or walked about the kitchen while Mykola and I ate. I had never had a less enjoyable meal.

After dinner the four of us moved to the little room and the adults talked while little Darusia eyed the strange woman from America with apprehension and a little awe. Tamara, I learned, was Russian, a fact she admitted in an embarrassed whisper as though she were confessing to a social disease that isn't mentioned in polite company or in front of children. She apologized, frequently, for the way she spoke Ukrainian. She



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had learned the language while she and Mykola were courting and she was determined that it would be her children's mother tongue.

There was an immediate rapport between us. The Russian woman had chosen to "convert" to Ukrainianism; the American woman had come to seek her Ukrainian roots. We recognized in each other a kindred spirit, for in a very real sense we were two strangers in a strange land who could understand too well the difficulties that this implied for each of us. Even the coincidence of sharing the same name was significant. Tamara is neither Ukrainian nor Russian. It was the name of a Georgian princess who was determined never to be dominated by her male lovers. When any of them attempted to assume authority over her, she had them hurled over a steep cliff.

We talked of many things that night: family, religion, politics, music. We exchanged funny anecdotes about our personal lives and introspective comparisons of our goals and insecurities. I learned that she was one of those Soviet women who have become feminists despite themselves and despite their upbringing in a male dominated society, women who are forced by the world they live in to comply with a form of domestic servitude, but who are constantly making courageous choices in their lives that defy all tradition and all the normal societal constraints. Like many other Soviet women struggling to survive in a world of endless shortages and endless lines, Tamara also had to endure a daily struggle against an im-

placable bureaucracy. In a world which allows few choices, she had made many that characterized the nature of the turbulent changes in the Soviet republics of the glasnost era. One of those choices was to reject her Russian heritage and take on the identity of her adopted "country."

Another centered on the fate of her unborn child. She confided to me that the pregnancy had been unplanned, that she had lain awake in despair for many nights wondering if she and Mykola could cope with having another mouth to feed, that she had contemplated having an abortion but had been unable to go through with it. She confessed that the decision had not been entirely altruistic. The birth of the child would allow the family to apply for a permit to move to a larger apartment.

We were together for no more than six hours. The next morning I boarded a train for Chernivtsi, hoping Tamara and I would be able to maintain at least some minimal contact until my next visit to Kiev. This, I already knew, would be no easy feat. Letters to and from the Soviet Union are delayed for up to six months or inexplicably "lost" or returned via Moscow with the bright red stamp of the official censor. Telephone calls are a nightmare of dealing with overloaded circuits and transoceanic operators on either end who are unable to understand each others' language.

But anyone who has traveled to the Soviet Union in recent years, and who has managed to go beyond touring muse-



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ums to spending quality time with the natives, knows the intense nature of the friendships that are born in a matter of days or even hours, friendships that will last a lifetime. This is especially true if the traveler happens to be in any of the republics that have taken the first steps toward sovereignty. The bond is made quickly and nurtured over time and distance by any means possible. The relationship is not weakened by the peculiarities of the Soviet postal and telephone systems. It survives, sometimes with no communication for months, even between people who know they may not see each other for years. It is a spiritual bond created by virtual strangers who have shared a quiet moment in a world gone mad, who have tried to understand each other, who have experienced together the charged atmosphere of a quiet revolution that is busily thumbing its nose at Moscow.

It was under these circumstances that I had met Tamara and in the following months we exchanged the letters we had promised to exchange. I learned about the birth of her second daughter, about the continuing complexities of daily life in Kiev that have been exacerbated by the worsening economic situation, about her concern for the health of her children in the polluted and radioactive atmosphere of Kiev which is not all that far from Chernobyl and which draws its water supply from rivers affected by Chernobyl's fall out and by industrial and toxic waste.

In her most recent letter to me Tamara wrote about another choice she had

made, one that was personally significant to me for it invited my participation in a ritual in which she will be renouncing the atheism she was raised with and formally acknowledging her acceptance of Christianity. It was a letter I read with awe, a letter in which she apologized once again for her "inadequate" Ukrainian and in which she asked if I would consent to be her godmother. She wrote that she knew it was a strange request and that church protocol might not approve of the slight difference in our ages. She wrote that she hoped I would not consider her request an imposition and that she did not expect me to fly to Kiev to accommodate her; if I agreed, a proxy could be found.

It took me two weeks to compose in *my* inadequate Ukrainian a letter of acceptance that would not tarnish nor trivialize the faith that she has in God and in me.



WILLIAM HEYEN

Something

(Editor's Note: William Heyen, a Christian of German descent, and Louis Daniel Brodsky, an American Jew, have been writing poems about the Holocaust for many years. Their most recent collaboration, Falling from Heaven: Holocaust Poems of a Jew and a Gentile, is reviewed in this issue. In this essay, Heyen explores his



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own relationship to the subject that has so possessed him as an artist.)

People ask me, "Do you feel guilty?"

My Christian parents emigrated to this country from Germany in the late 1920s. I was born in Brooklyn in 1940. So far as I know, I've never done anything intentionally or unintentionally to hurt the feelings of or to physically harm a Jew.

I don't feel guilty, exactly, but I feel *something*. It may be that my Holocaust poems have been an attempt to understand and dramatize this *something* that I feel. It may be that there is no single word for this feeling that I have that I am involved in, connected with, responsible for history, a fated participant in that period when the Nazis forced us into an abyss that will from now on color all our thoughts and feelings, even our most hopeful thoughts and feelings, with darkness.

In "When Memory Brings People Together," his November 10, 1987 address in the West German Reichstag, Elie Wiesel said, "As a Jew, I have never believed in collective guilt. Only the guilty were guilty. Children of killers are not killers, but children."

Surely. But what of the parents of killers? When they raise their children to be anti-Semites, do they not share in their children's crimes? And what of the parents of these parents? And so on back to the dim beginnings. But, in any case, the present generations of children, myself included, did not murder

Julius Meier at Buchenwald—see Walter Poller's *Medical Block Buchenwald*—or Anne Frank at Bergen Belsen.

And what of all those that my poem "Riddle" snags in its net?

*and some planted the wheat,
and some poured the steel
and some cleared the rails
and some raised the cattle.*

*Some smelled the smoke,
some just heard the news.
Were they Germans? Were they Nazis?
Were they human? Who killed the Jews?*

And, in theological terms, what of a deity who allowed the Holocaust, who "watched, and witnessed, and knew" ("Simple Truths") Is God guilty?

God as reciprocity and presence and circular power must at least feel, must be made to feel, by way of our prayers and poems, the same *something*.

Over twenty-five years I've finished about sixty Holocaust pieces. I've been over them so often—hundreds, thousands of times—have heard many of them over half my lifetime in such entangled and complex contexts of thought and theory that, as a whole, a single unit, a book, they seem now almost opaque to me—Susan Sontag speaks of the "sheer opaqueness" of the murder of the six million European Jews—a Holocaust muse's utterance of

*red streaks of voice across
an ionized atmosphere,
gassed Hungarian clawhair & ribnails &*



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*tongues, a burst heart
breaking into static as she spoke,
into cancelling sparks,
her now never-ending speechlessness,
never.*

(*"The Secret"*)

I am not clear about what I've done, what my poems as a whole do. There seems to be much static, many cancelling sparks as I try to remember, imagine, curse, pray, understand that which for me seems almost beyond memory, imagination, curse, prayer, understanding.

But I meant to mean well, of course, and to be truthful about human nature and the human condition in some fundamental way, of course. This is why what Anthony Hecht wrote of my Holocaust poems raises the question that is with me every day. Hecht wrote that the poems reach "that domain of art in which criminal and victim, caught in the light of a steady vision, are virtually the same."

If this is true—I'm not sure it is—was something operative in me that needed to degrade the innocent who, after all, were not, at least in their earthly incarnations during the Third Reich, themselves murderers? Or, if Hecht is right, would this mean, hopefully, not that I've needed to level all humanity to one and the same determined actor-acted upon-victim-perpetrator, but that my writing sensibility, my conscience over the years has tried to identify with both the victims and the criminals—by way of dreams and ravings and readings—

and share pain and suffering and responsibility? "Do I follow me?" as I ask in "The Census"? Do you follow me? I am, surely, responsible for the *way* I remember and *what* I choose to remember.

I do not feel guilty about the Holocaust. But I do feel part of it, and always will, I believe, even at the moment of my own death. But I wonder what the *something* is that I feel.

I was not there shooting people into the ditches, or within the gas or flames, but was I there? And in what position? Perhaps in both positions, as part of the unitary experience that is in the end my spiritual life? And you? In countless subtle ways are we not part of the human ecology of the Holocaust? The something I feel keeps me, for better or worse, from the silence I both yearn for and resist. It may be that the "domain of art," that place beyond dimension, has its own resolutions. Meanwhile, I do not feel guilty, but something in me, something beyond blame or blamelessness, has its own moral necessity, and I must acknowledge and keep committing myself to this something.



WILLIAM HEYEN

Communion Spoon

At Buchenwald, a prisoner with a bowl of soup
knelt by a shape propped against a wall,
held a spoon in its face, pretended to feed it, looked
left, right, then thrust the spoon into his own mouth.
The other had been dead for days.

Last night, something dreamed me into the kingdom of
Shoah.

I was the useful corpse against that wall.
You held the proffered spoon in front of me.
I pitied you who lived, for I myself was blessed
in my new estate, but afraid to wake,

to change places, as here, living nor dead,
we learn that soup, spoonful by spoonful, is made with ash,
that ash digests to shadow, that shadow takes us
to sleep with it each day wherein our eyes
dart this way and that, and gaze, but cannot close,

no matter the crematoria, no matter nothing. Witness
sleep then, wherein the nothing, this communion, this
spoon engraved with dream wavers, thrusts,
the taste of it, ash on our tongues, the Lord
our shadow we shall not want.

LOUIS DANIEL BRODSKY

Lipizzaner Fantasies of an SS Officer

Fantasies prance across the sawdusty floor
Of my brain's three-ring arena
Like a touring team of Austrian Lipizzaners
Executing antic goose steps
Before an audience subdued in awed amazement:

First, as ghostly panzer divisions
Doing dressage maneuvers
Across a map of North Africa
Hung from a crumbling bunker ceiling
Beneath Berlin's upheaved yeshivas and synagogues,

They clip and clop on greaseless tracks
Toward the unsupportable fortification
Where my bivouacked dreams
Have entrenched against the enemy, Nightmare
To hold Sleep's strategic oasis;

Then, they scurry and lurch past my eyes
Like red-hot swastika-wheels
Vibrating boxcars into violent pitching,
Atop which even rodeo riders
Couldn't stay ten seconds;

Finally as *Sonderzüge* hauling human cattle
For rendering at Nazi-operated
Meat-packing factories — Sachsenhausen,
Mauthausen, Auschwitz-Birkenau —
They arrive at my inner ears' depots

Where numb, slumberous *Kapos* and clerks
Wait to process endless tens,
Hundreds, and thousands of thousands
Before ordering them to disinfection showers
Or moribund work crews

Assigned to carpenter crucifixes
And lay tracks along platforms in the Terminal
Where Europe's Torahtrains
Disgorge History's unfortunate cargo
In a gasping mass of black ash and smoke.

Every restive a.m.,
My nose detects those offensive odors —
Coal raging in locomotive maws
Indistinguishable from flesh
Crackling, like bacon, in Topf ovens —

As though the scrofulous stench I sense
Were emanating from chimneys
Surrounding my sweat-filled pillow,
Chimneys shaped like these Mannheim buildings
Drenching my windows in almond halos.

Why such disdainful hallucinations
Intrude on recuperative rest
Remains unexplained. I suspicion this:
Their intransigent dances macabres,
Gothic dressage, spectral quadrilles,

Choreographed with rigid precision,
Must be diabolically inspired
By the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,
Who perform nightly in my dreams
While I applaud. *Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!*

A Story by

IRVIN FAUST

Bootsie Wants Harvard

"Daddy," Bootsie Feigenspan says, "do you have to handle all that adipose tissue?"

Calvin Feigenspan looks up from the back page of the *Post*. Bootsie is coming up with a fair amount of that stuff since she entered the 12th grade; well, he decides that maybe seniors are entitled, so he patiently says, "Honey, if you mean fat, please say fat."

Clara, who is walking in to check on Bootsie's S.A.T. application, stops, looks, listens. Bootsie is saying, "I don't want to be evasive, and I do want to be fair. I realize it's not *all* fat, and you're quite proud of the marbling—"

"*Extremely* proud, babe. As was your grandfather. Longhorn is not only the best looking beef in Mahattan West, it is the juiciest and tastiest. It's largely due to the marbling."

"But it *does* contain a good many globules of, well, fat."

"It has its share. All good beef has." Feigenspan remains calm although it has not been the best week of his recent life.

"Ron Karleski's father," Bootsie comes back, "eats meat that is sixty-eight percent leaner."

"Is that the kid with the blue-eyed contact lenses?"

"He wears those lenses. He also plays lacrosse."

"Gals never make passes at boys who wear glasses."

"I don't think that's funny," Clara says.

"It's a little doggerel in reverse," Feigenspan replies. "Loosen up, both of you."

"I'm loose," Clara says, hands on her newly sculpted hips. "I never cared for Ogden Nash."

"Was that Ogden Nash? I thought it was Fred Allen."

"It was Ogden Nash."

"You're both wrong," Bootsie says. "It was Dorothy Parker."

"Oh," Feigenspan says.

"Of course," Clara says. "It makes sense."

"She was a female chauvinist pig," Bootsie says.

The Jets are struggling and Feigenspan would love to get back to them, but he calmly says, "It was delivered in the context of the times, honey, you always have to consider the context of the times."

"A boy has a right to wear contact lenses that will change his basic eye color. That's *his* context, Daddy."

"You got me there, kid." Bootsie seems to have detoured away from her agenda, but he is not making book. Sure enough: "Ron's father handles Tasty Health Beef."

"Uh oh."

"There's nothing wrong with that," Clara says.

"Look," he says, "if you are both leading up to the cholesterol thing, here is some news. Smoking, drinking and Type A personality are bigger causes of heart trouble than all the meat in Timbuktu."

"They have meat in a poverty area like that?" Clara says.

"You bet your bippy."

There is a moment of silence, but he is still not making any bets. "Well," Bootsie says, shriveling up the moment, "tell that to James Garner."

He carefully lays his paper to one side. "Is that Ron Karleski's line? Or his father's?"

Clara says, "It's a reasonable observation, no matter who made it."

"Well, here we go with James Garner. Now hear this. The man was a smoker and a drinker. As noted above, those are —"

"In the minds of the public," Bootsie says, "James Garner, standard meat products and infarction go hand in hand."

"Is that a fact?"

"Yes, it is. And if the public perceives a thing to be so, then psychologically it's so."

"Is that a fact?"

"Yes, it is."

"Well, that's the public's problem."

Another moment. A vibrating moment. "Leaner is tougher," Feigenspan mutters.

"Come on, Calvin," Clara says. "It's a little stringier, that's all."

"How would you know?"

"I had some at the Karleski's."

"Thank you, Brutus."

"Come on, Calvin."

"Daddy, why don't you take a small order from Mr. Karleski?"

He looks at her. She says, "At least talk to him, that's not asking the world."

"Leave the world out of it."

"It's Mr. Karleski's guess that business isn't terrific."

"It's perfectly fine."

"But not terrific."

"*Nothing* is terrific. We live in a non-terrific age. Ask the Jets. Ask the Russian economy."

"Tasty Health Beef is doing beautifully," Clara says.

Feigenspan gazes out at the river through laced fingers. He has become quite a gazer in recent months. This time around, as he gazes, he thinks about Bootsie and then he thinks about little white lies. For he has told her one. Business is not perfectly fine. It is just about OK. That is worth a sigh. Two. Soon he will be shelling out forty g's a year for school, which is more than the old man grossed in a very good 1944, black market and all. Kent at Swarthmore, Bootsie at Harvard, where, like the Stork Club, hardly anybody gets in, and when they do, the cover charge is twenty thousand per...

He looks up. Margo is standing there. Margo has been with him for 12 years. "Mr. Karleski," Margo says.

"Send him in," he says in a brisk voice.

Karleski is a tall, reedy type in navy blue by Polo or Bill Blass. Light blue shirt with a white collar, navy blue tie sprinkled with white tennis racquets. Black loafers with tassels. He holds out a medium rare hand. Feigenspan reaches over and pumps it once, nods at the chrome and web chair in front of his campaign desk. Karleski sits down smoothly, hitches up his creases with two fingers, crosses his legs. He is wearing fishnet socks, white. It blows the whole deal.

"Thanks for coming," Feigenspan says, still brisk.

"My pleasure. Our kids are classmates." He has a high, thin voice, which sounds great on Gene Kelly.

"So I understand," Feigenspan says.

"Not that I've used that as an in to get to you."

"No?"

"Mr. Feigenspan. Cal—"

"Calvin."

"Calvin, *you* called *me*."

"That's true. I'll come right to the point, if there's no objection."

"If there is," Karleski says without a smile, "objection overruled. We are both busy men."

"Yes indeed. Mr. Kar—"

"Jack."

"Jack, I'd appreciate it very much if you would stop working my kid over."

Jack Karleski now smiles. He has a great set of teeth. Only his dentist could tell. "I would never do that," he says in Gene Kelly's voice. "It's unethical."

"The beef you devour is sixty-eight per cent leaner."

"Facts are facts," Karleski says deadpan. "Your kid probably picked that up from Ron."

"Uh huh. I see."

"What is it you see, Calvin?"

"You're working on her through your kid."

"Calvin, if I may, at the very least you're somewhat defensive. At the very worst you're paranoid."

"Don't you want an order from me?"

"Absolutely. To quote Captain Queeg, I kid you not. But only because it's good business for both of us. And good health. Like our offspring know. Along with scads of others."

Feigenspan looks out at the gently white-capped Hudson. He looks back at Karleski, who says, "Well then, would you care to place an order? I can give you an introductory special, one and a half for the price of one. As long as I'm here."

"I'm happy with what I got."

"I can understand that. Believe me, I can. But it's just a matter of habit, plus inertia. If James Garner—"

"Please. Don't give me James Garner. He's got his own troubles."

"That's for sure. Check, no James Garner."

"Thank you."

"We aim to please. Your aim will help. An old one from our childhood days, if you recall."

"I recall. In the john, over the urinal."

"Right on, sir. A lot classier than the material you see today. Calvin, our offer won't last forever. Nothing does."

The frothy white caps resemble tennis racquets that are lobbing and volleying except Becker or Edberg are not attached to them. Feigenspan laces his fingers. "Lay off my kid, Jack."

"You want me to keep her out of my house?"

"You got it."

"Done."

"OK."

"Although you know kids."

"I know them."

"So how about a small order?"

"You are a bull dog, I'll say that."

"Calvin, I believe in my product."

"Otherwise you couldn't hustle it, right?"

"Handle it. Handle. So what's the verdict?"

"I'll think a little."

"Absolutely. You want some literature?"

"With a Miss Texarkana who owes everything to your stuff?"

"Miss San Antonio. She means every word she lets us quote, she works with retarded kids." Karleski unwinds and stands up. "Don't think too long, there's a thing called overthinking." He holds out the pink hand, which gets twitched. "My friend," Karleski says, "if L.B.J. had been into Tasty Health, there's a swell chance we'd have a real handle on the homeless problem. Chow, Calvin."

If there's one thing Feigenspan prides himself on, it is being a thoughtful boss. So with Karleski out and business less than sensational, he tells Margo to go home early. Margo, being from the old school, asks if he is sure? He is sure.

He fiddles with some papers, then he gets out and shapes up the platform, which doesn't require too much shaping up. He sweeps up all around the place. Finally, his sour stomach somewhat sweetened, he activates the alarms and precinct lines, slams home bolts, snaps locks. Slowly, he walks through the meat center, which has been his corner of the universe for fifty-one years. He slides into the white Lincoln Continental, which Gibby the Mooch has been guarding with his life, slips Gibby five, turns on the smoothly obedient engine. He glides north along the river, then a few blocks east to Old Broadway and 128th. He angles in, parks in front of the tenement that is covered up to the second floor with Spanish names, and he sits behind the wheel. As if Thurston has barked Abracadabra, they materialize out of nowhere. He nods. They run their hands over the fenders, pat the hood, kick the tires. He doesn't move. Fritzie Feigenspan never had the guts to touch anybody's wheels until the owner disappeared upstairs, and that specifically included Konrad Feigenspan and his string of Studebakers. He smiles a little.

After sprinkling a few dollar bills around, the President of Longhorn Provisions drives slowly downtown and through the 96th Street transverse, thence to Park and 77th. Franklin on the door snaps to and slides in as he slides out. Richer by a ten, Franklin eases the Lincoln down to the four hundred a month garage.

Clara had practically given up on him, but she no longer carries on. She fixes tuna salad which he dutifully manages, along with some Blue Nun. Clara dips into her Tofuti.

"Where's Boots?" he says.

Clara looks mildly surprised. "At her S.A.T. course."

"Who's teaching it, Jack Karleski?"

"That's a scream."

"I thought you'd go for it. But I do lose track, who is teaching it?"

"It's a Stanley Kaplan course."

"Oh, I remember now. I knew Stan Kaplan in high school."

"It's not the most unusual name in the world."

"He looked like Moe of Larry, Moe, and Curly."

"I never cared for them."

"We used to hit him over the head with our math books."

"I'll bet his mother loved that."

"Are you kidding? Stan would *never* tell his mother."

She waves that away as if it's an annoying fly. "Calvin, I want to talk to you."

"We're talking. Keep going."

She gives that a slight brush. "You know how important Harvard is to Bootsie."

"I know."

"She's not black and she's not poor, she has to get in on her own."

"I guess that's the deal."

"Kent had his chance," she says, "now it's her turn."

"I could never figure out why he wanted a Quaker school."

"He was a great admirer of Mother Teresa and Richard Nixon."

"Oh."

"Bootsie desperately wants Harvard."

"I hear you."

"The obstacles are stupendous. They're almost impossible to overcome."

"She shall overcome."

"I hope you're not being funny."

"No way."

"The application. My God, the application." Clara shakes her head. "The essay. My God, the essay."

"Slow and steady wins the race."

"What?"

"Slow and—"

"Never mind. Calvin, I want to ask you something."

He sips his Blue Nun. "Hit me."

She gives him her look. "I want to ask you to be more supportive. She needs a huge amount of support."

"Well, I bet if I looked at my check book, I'm paying for Stanley Kaplan."

"She needs much more than that. She needs *empathic* support. Calvin, your daughter is a terrific person."

"Don't I know."

"Remember, she *could* be on sex or pot."

"Please. Bite your tongue."

"I am just pointing out the facts. This girl deserves, *merits* our support. How about it?"

"I really think I'm doing a halfway decent job. I—"

"Calvin, didn't you ever want something, and if you didn't get it it would break your heart?"

He thinks of Helmut Klein's wife Martha, with the Dietrich gams. Helmut is his oldest friend and friendliest competitor. Fourteen times he almost got Martha to that Jersey motel. "Sure," he says. "A Mickey Mouse watch. My father said I should live so long.

She examines that as if it is adipose tissue. "All right then, you know what I mean. This must be a team effort."

"You and me and Stanley Kaplan."

"You and I and all the empathic, centripetal support we can muster."

"You got it." He holds up his glass. "So help me, you got it."

"Thank you, Calvin. Believe me, you'll feel so much better."

He looks at the empty bottle. "I feel better already."

Feigenspan and empathic, centripetal support:

"Honey, I'd like to take you out for Columbus Day."

"That's sweet of you, Daddy, but I don't believe in Columbus Day."

"You mean because he was playing around with Isabella? They were all chauvinist pigs in those days."

"I couldn't care less about that. It's a misnomer and false history, that's all."

"Bootsie, it doesn't swing if you call it Leif Erickson Day. It's too late and the Italians wouldn't go for it."

"That's just too bad. For all of them. The fact is that Native Americans were here to welcome both of those intruders."

"I'll take you out for Native American Day."

She thinks for a moment, she was always a great little thinker. "Is it important for you to take me out?"

"Well yes, it is."

"That's a bit different, then."

"Take a break from all those books and college stuff."

A little more thinking. "All right, Daddy."

"Great. You pick the restaurant."

"How about Jud Judson."

"Honey, that's a steak house. An old style steak house."

"It's your favorite."

"Bootsie, you're playing my piano again."

"No, I'm not, I mean it. Don't worry, I'll find something. It's all right, Daddy."

He gently hugs her. "If Harvard doesn't take you, give it back to the Native Americans."

He receives a large hello from Jud and he orders a Beefeater and tonic. Then he reaches into a side pocket and pulls out a Mickey Mouse watch with a gold bracelet. He slips it on her wrist.

"Daddy, it's *darling*. It's the cutest thing I ever saw."

He grins over his drink and says, "If you feel funny wearing it in school, I'll exchange it for one of those watches that look great but you can't tell the time."

"The kids will *love* it. So do I." She leans over and kisses him on the cheek. "Just for that, I'll order a steak."

"Hey, don't go crazy. They have sea food and salads here."

"Will you have one of those?"

"Sure. One of each. Honey, this is Calvin Feigenspan."

"All right. Order two steaks. Make mine well done."

He winces but waves Sally over and carefully order two fillets, one rare, one well done, no *pink*. Sally is cool. She swishes away with a poker face. Barbie keeps rotating her wrist and smiling. He is tempted to tell her Mickey's eyes are diamonds, but that would be conspicuous consumption.

The steaks are mountains. They are juicy and tender as a marshmallow, even hers. She does beautifully and practically finishes the whole thing, but just before the summit, she turns pale, excuses herself, gets up and hurries to the ladies' room. He hands Sally a twenty and says, Go check up. He paces up and down in the alcove, receiving periodic reports from Sally, who turns out to be a calmly efficient nurse. Telling himself he did not screw it up, he resolves to buy a Minnie Mouse with sapphire eyes on the way home...

"Can I talk to you, Mr. F?"

He pulls his head away from the invoice that is great for pumping stomach acid, plus the mind-pictures of Bootsie, pale and silent in the cab, limply wearing two wristwatches. He looks up at Margo, who is standing in front of his desk. "Sure, Marg," he says. "Sit down, make yourself homely, I'm kidding, as you know I consider you a doll."

She smiles a little and sits primly in the web and chrome chair she picked out at Bloomingdale's. He can't see them but he is positive her ankles are crossed, something Bootsie thinks is a hoot. Feeling somewhat better, he primes her pump with a large smile; Margo at forty-something, still blushes a lot. She says, "Well, I guess the best thing is to be right up front."

"That ranks very high on the best-things list."

"I have given you two weeks notice."

He sits far back in his swivel chair. "Don't tell me you're getting married? You certainly have been cozy, but hey, that's great."

"Well—"

"Whatever he does, you'll need two salaries. Believe me."

She blushes. "I'm not getting married."

"Your father's moving in with you? That's also great, but you still need the mazuma."

"My father is still doing great, thank God. I have to leave."

"Why do you have to leave?" he says gently.

"You've heard of Jesse Helms?"

"That old jaboney who married Miss Alabama or somebody?"

"You're thinking of J. Strom Thurmond."

"I am? Who did Helms marry?"

"I don't know and I really don't care."

"OK."

"I don't like to say this, Mr. F., but in a significant way, you and Jesse Helms—"

"Wait a minute. He's the character from North or South Carolina."

"North."

"Sure, the tobacco jaboney."

"He's more than that, much more. He protects the tobacco cartel."

"I'll buy that."

"Well, tobacco is a poison. And meat—"

He holds up a stop sign. "Whoa. Hold it. Wrong and wrong again. Meat is *protein*."

She blushes. "It is also fatty tissue. Fat clings to arterial walls the way baby monkeys cling to their mothers."

"Is that a fact?"

"Definitely."

"Well, tough for the baby monkeys."

"That's *cruel*."

"Why is it cruel? You ever see a baby monkey? I have. They have it made in the shade."

"Tell that to Jesse Helms."

"You tell it to Jesse Helms."

"I wouldn't go *near* Jesse Helms."

"Listen, it's a free country."

"It certainly is."

"OK."

She blushes some more. "Smoking is on the increase among women and minorities."

"It's on the decline among white males, which includes yours truly. Baby monkeys don't smoke."

"Don't be so sure."

"I'm sure. I'm *positive*."

"True or false, it does not excuse him. Or you."

The blush has narrowed down to two red dots. He says, "Margo, you want a raise? We're tight, but I'll work something out."

She shakes her head.

"What do you want?"

"I want not to be part of an operation that plugs up American arteries."

"Uh huh." He leans forward. "Did Jack Karleski tell you that?"

"It's immaterial."

"I see."

"Facts are facts. I'll break in a new girl, don't worry."

"Who's worried?" He sits back. "What are your plans? You gonna work for Roto Rooter?"

"Who?"

"Skip it. Look, take the rest of the day off. Get your head together. I'll forget the whole thing, it never happened." He swivels toward the river.

"Are you going to change your policies?"

He swivels back. "Listen, Margo. Not as my secretary, but as a normal, intelligent person. Am I gonna switch from the best meat in the business to shoe leather? Does a chicken have *cojones*?"

"Two weeks, Mr. F."

"You can leave tomorrow," he says softly.

After eight days of advertising in the *News* and *Post*, and interviewing girls who stipulate four weeks vacation the first year and two coffee breaks a day, he comes up with Zelda Crafton, who is off the wall, but at least loves real burgers and hates turkey franks. He works late every night proofing her

letters, sticking on post-it notes explaining that i comes before e except after c, and why he does not require fifteen commas in a sentence. She makes little whirring and clicking sounds, and says, You're the boss, and screws up some more.

He brings it up at home.

"You had a good one in Margo," Bootsie says.

"I don't wanna hear that," he says.

"I understand she's working at the South Street Seaport," Clara says.

"I don't wanna hear that. How do you know?"

"We've always been friendly with Margo," Clara says. "She would probably be willing to talk to you."

"That is very big of her," he says. "She made her bed, let her twist and turn in it."

"Come on, Calvin —"

"Why don't you two work on that Harvard application, or Stanley Kaplan, or something? *Anything*."

Whenever his mother had the blues, she bought a new hat. Whenever the old man took a bath in the market, he bought a new suit. Whenever Feigenspan hits a slippery spot, he gets a car wash. Every day that week he drives over to Arnold's Brushless near the river and sits back and relaxes while the water sloshes over his steel cocoon and sponges flop against the windshield like big, friendly puppies. On Friday Arnold himself hooks him onto the belt. He says, "Six bucks, Calvin," always wanting it up front, not a bad policy. He pays, sits back, clamps his eyelids together. The belt moves slowly, smoothly. He slides into the best nap he has had in weeks. But then he snaps awake. Willie is walking over to unhook him. He opens the window. "What's cookin'?"

"I'm gettin' you offa the belt."

"I mean what's cookin' here?"

"Like what?"

"Like the wash felt different."

"You always go to sleep." Arnold, who has walked up, makes this observation.

"Yes, but my subconscious is always on duty. You using less water?"

"How did your subconscious like it?" Arnold says.

"OK. I guess. But it felt different."

"It is different. We didn't use water."

"How do you mean that?"

"I mean we stopped using water."

"How can you have a car wash without water?"

"It's a brushless wash."

"The question still stands."

"It's not written in the stars that you have to use water."

"It's one of those things that's a given."

"You mean it's a rule?"

"Sure."

"Rules are like records. They were made to be broken. Ty Cobb's records were broken."

"Ty Cobb was a whacko. Rules are still rules."

"Just tell me one thing. Is your car clean? I'm asking you to evaluate the job."

He steps out of the car. "It looks pretty clean," he says.

"That's the acid test."

"Not really."

"It's all in the sponges. They're specially treated."

"Wait a minute."

"I'm waiting."

"Six bucks. You always charge five fifty."

"Correct. Up till today."

"Where does the extra four bits go? To a Jack Karleski?"

"You know Jackie?"

"I have crossed his path. So he's into you too?"

"It so happens I get twenty-five cents and the Last Chance to Make It Fund gets the other twenty-five cents."

"Who runs the fund, Karleski?"

"His firm does the administrative work."

"Tasty Health Beef is into, or out of, water?"

"I'll explain it to you briefly. Jackie works for an umbrella group called Medallion Life Enhancers. In that context, beef definitely ties into water."

"Is that Jack's position?"

"It happens to be a very viable position."

"This is rich, is it ever rich."

"Would you like some more information on the tie-in?"

"I'll write a letter to Ivan Boesky, he'll fill me in."

"That's not worthy of you, Calvin. You're better than that."

"No, I'm not."

"I won't argue. But look at the bright side, the conservation side."

Feigenspan gets back into his car. "I am looking at the contradiction-in-terms side," he says through the open window. "Call me when you start using corn flakes, I'll bring my own milk." As he drives off, Arnold's voice is following him: "Get hold of Eisenhower's speech on water. He pronounces it *wotter*."

He sits in his office. It is very late. He stares at the new locker, some (im)balance sheets. He glances at Zelda's letter. It is typed on a slant, each line climbing a hill to the upper right-hand corner. He gets up, wanders outside to the platform, wanders back. He pops three Roloids. He studies the wall and the pictures of big-time steak men: Manny Wolf, Al Schacht, Jack Dempsey. On Dempsey's picture is written evenly, "From one champ to another." He shakes his head slowly and looks out at the white-capped river...

The bell rings.

He sits up, calls out, "Get it, Margo." He blinks a few times. Telling himself he is not losing it, he gets up and walks to the door. A short, blocky boy with a pony tail and an earring in his left ear is looking up at him. Feigenspan taps his forehead and says, "This is just what I need."

"Calvin J. Feigenspan?" the boy says.

"You won't get an argument from me."

"My name is Ron Karleski. I go to school with your daughter."

"I had a hunch that was the deal."

Ron's voice is deeper than his father's as he says, "Here you are, sir," and he reaches up and hands him an envelope.

"The envelope, please."

"You've got it, sir."

"Very good point."

"Open it, sir."

"I won the Irish sweepstakes?"

"I don't know about that, sir, but open it anyway."

Feigenspan sighs. He tears the envelope open with a r-i-i-p. He pulls out a piece of paper. "It's not the winning ticket."

"No, sir. "But if you read it quickly you'll get the gist."

"I'm really not in the mood."

"It scans easily, sir."

Another, louder sigh. In a monotone, Feigenspan reads, "Sir, you are destroying a large segment of the public. This segment is in the main the parental group of the new generation. Therefore, a good many children will group up without parental guidance. You can rectify this situation and help save a generation by switching to Tasty Health Beef Products immediately. This will also be a fine symbolic gesture. Thank you." He looks down at Ron who is peering up at him with extremely blue eyes. "It's not signed," Feigenspan says.

"Yes, it is, sir. At the very bottom. The members of the senior class of East End Prep. See?" He reaches up.

"That's a group thing."

"It's a valid signature, sir."

"No, it's not."

"Yes, it is, sir."

"No, it's not."

Ron's blue eyes are squinty. He motions with his right hand. A girl wearing chinos and a sweat shirt that says, "You wouldn't understand, it's a black thing," is now standing beside him. "It's a valid signature, Daddy," Bootsie says.

Feigenspan gazes at her for quite a long time. After which he says, "Lipstick doesn't go with that outfit."

"That's immaterial, Daddy. Would you please sign under our signature where it says, I do so agree? We'll have it notarized."

"There's a cancer-causing agent in lipstick."

"Sir," Ronnie says, "that's begging the question."

"Bootsie, please go home."

"I can't, Daddy."

"Sure you can."

"I really can't."

"You place one foot in front of the other, Keep on truckin'. Presto, you're home."

"Daddy, this requires closure."

"Baby, you have to look at it from a different perspective. The world has been trying for closure for a million years with a million things. So there has to be a reason for non-closure. Why upset the apple cart?"

"I really can't accept that. And to boil it down to the here and now, I need it because you're my essay."

"Essay?"

"That's correct, sir."

He keeps looking at her lipstick and her sweatshirt. "Wait a minute."

"Would you please sign, sir?"

"Wait a minute."

"What, Daddy?"

"Are you saying I am Harvard."

"That's an offbeat way of putting it."

"Well, bear with me."

"All right. You're the material to get me in, if that's what you mean. So in that sense, yes, basically you're Harvard."

He takes a quick look at Al Schacht and Jack Dempsey on the wall. "Honey?"

"Yes, Daddy?"

"Jud Judson."

"Sir, you're not going to be defensive, are you?"

"Boots, Jud Judson. Is he in this essay?"

"Yes. He's a key figure."

"Did you really get sick?"

"Sir, she was *miserable*."

"Did you, Boots?"

"For two days, Daddy."

"It's the middle climax, sir."

"Mickey Mouse, what about Mickey Mouse?"

"It showed you at your best. So did Minnie. They get a paragraph."

He glances as swiftly as he can at Blue Eyes. "Am I the lead in *his* play?"

"My essay. Yes, sir."

"Yes, Daddy."

He rubs his hand over his five o'clock shadow. "Boots, did you set up Margo?"

"She was totally receptive, Daddy. She could never tolerate Jesse Helms."

"Arnold the Brushless, was he totally receptive?"

"Sir—"

"Was he, Boots?"

"His conscience has been bothering him for a long time, Daddy."

"Bootsie...Clara..."

"You have to see it in a centripetal way, Daddy."

"Yeah, I see."

"This is a team effort, sir. Please sign and join the team."

"Bootsie?"

"Yes, Daddy?"

"I got a problem."

"What's that, Daddy?"

"Well, correct me if I'm wrong, but I get the distinct impression that you're both using the same essay."

"Basically it's the same document. Although I approach it as your daughter."

"There's more emotionality, sir."

"Ah."

"I can see things in a way he can't, Daddy, although Ronnie is a terrific role-player."

"I've written some poetry. Sir—"

"Doesn't he want Harvard?"

"Ronnie wants Stanford."

"Ah."

"And Harvard and Stanford really don't communicate."

"Ah."

"And we'll have different titles."

"Ah."

"Although I don't have one yet."

"Journey Out Of Hubris, sir. That's what I'm leaning toward."

"Daddy, I'm coming very close to the early action deadline. Please sign so I can have positive closure."

Out of a clear blue sky, Feigenspan can see Joe Bfsplk. Joe was the poor little guy from Dogpatch who walked around with a dark cloud over his head. He really liked Joe, who took a lot of the heat when the old man got on him, which was almost always. He stares at Joe Bfsplk. Suddenly, out of the same blue sky, Feigenspan is standing with his arms stretched out on his platform. "Karleski," he yells.

The cobblestoned street with its neat old lamp lights is as quiet as ever.

"Karleski. Yo, Jack Karleski. I know you're out there. You are a sniveling, underhanded manipulator. Be a man for once. Come on out, let's settle this once and for all."

Arms akimbo, he swivels slowly in every direction. He hears a pattering sound behind his back. He whirls. A line of solemn-faced kids in chinos, sweat shirts and jogging shoes is standing before the platform. The kids are staring up at him. The girl in the center of the line is wearing a sweat shirt that says, "Mother Earth Is Crying. Dry Her Tears."

"Sir?"

He whirls again, arms and fists high. Ronnie, whose sweat shirt is green and says nothing, is tapping his chest. "Sir, I'm the only Karleski around here."

"Daddy, you'll have to deal with Ronnie and me."

Longhorn is the end building in the row and from where he is standing on the platform he can see the motel on the palisades that he and Martha never occupied. He can also see Joe Bfsplk trudging up and down in front of the motel under his dark cloud. He also sees the old man, who is saying, Let Joe have her, if I ever catch you doing it where you eat, I'll break your head.

"Sir."

He feels something and looks down. The letter from the senior class of East End is sticking to his fingers like fly paper. Now he looks at Bootsie. She is very solemn behind her lipstick, she was very solemn at six months. He walks back, slaps the paper against the door jamb, whips out his fountain pen and signs it. He holds it out with two fingers. With a flick of her hand, Bootsie picks it off in front of Ronnie. She spins around and waves it over her head. The lined-up kids break into applause. Bootsie kisses him on the cheek, and with Ronnie right behind, skims down the platform steps.

He cleans the windows, including the one on the new meat locker. He sweeps and mops. He polishes his desk. He sets up the alarm and the precinct lines. He snaps every lock, slams every bolt. He walks out.

Walking very slowly, he passes Helmut's Top Rank Pork, Sal Matucci's Sweetest Veal, Lon Greenberg's Henry Hudson Lamb and the new hustler, Dick Finley—Wholesale-Retail-Let's Talk Business. At the end of the street, Gibby blinks himself awake. "Aw quite on the western front," Gibby says. He's been saying that for twenty-nine years. Feigenspan is tempted to ask how much Bootsie slipped him, but Gibby would look hurt and tell him he would never take a dime from a boss's baby. He hands him two bills and gets into the Lincoln, warms it up, drives away.

He parks on Old Broadway and 128th. He sits and waits. Silently they gather. They go over the car. He gives it time, then slides the window down. "Lorenzo."

Lorenzo looks up from the grill, saunters over.

"Lorenzo, please do me a favor."

"Sure, Mr. F."

"Get me a can of paint."

Lorenzo says, "Mario, get the man some paint."

Mario, who is kicking a tire, says, Sure, Man. He scoots into the dark vestibule of the apartment house on Konrad and Hildegard Feigenspan. He is right back with a can which he hands to Lorenzo. Lorenzo reaches into the window. "Thank you," Feigenspan says. He pushes a button. "You and six others get in."

Lorenzo nods, taps six boys, says, "Cool it and get in."

They slide into the back. Three are on the seat, three on the floor. Lorenzo gets in beside Feigenspan.

Gibby jumps out of his little hut with the tiny TV. His eyes are very neutral. Feigenspan hands him a ten, says, Go spend it in the diner, get a Greek salad and de-caf. Gibby starts out for the diner; he will detour to the River Bar.

He pulls up in front of the Longhorn. He says, "Wait here."

He gets out, climbs onto the platform, walks to the left-hand corner of his building. Starting there, working carefully across to the door, across to the right-hand corner, he sprays in red:

JOURNEY OUT OF HUBRIS

He steps back, nods, returns to the door, unlocks, enters. He disconnects the alarm and precinct lines, twirls combinations and unsnaps locks and bolts. Walks back outside, jumps down off the platform. When he reaches the Lincoln, he says to Lorenzo, "What's the verdict?"

"That how you spell journey?"

"I think so."

"Cool, man."

"Did you know we went to the same school, Lorenzo?"

"You went to One Twenty-Five?"

"Yes, I did."

"Cool, man."

He reaches into the open window and hands Lorenzo the car keys. "Square one is ignition," he says, "round one door and trunk."

"OK, man, you need my paint?"

"Sorry about that." He reaches in. "Thank you."

"No problem, man."

"I've got eight, ten cans of kerosene down on the first floor."

"Your insurance paid up?"

"That's my problem, Lorenzo."

"Sure, man, I dig."

He turns around and starts walking. When he reaches Helmut's place, he hears the car doors open and close. Another moment and he hears the rustling of Nikes and Reeboks on the cobblestones, an excited babble of voices. He does a little Charlie Chaplin-hop, and keeps on truckin'.



DAVID IGNATOW

An Autumn Tale

No, no, no, the leaves are saying,
thrashing about in the wind. We
don't want to go. We don't want
to be parted from our branch. We
love it here, even as we brown
with age. Love must be forever
or it is not love.

The leaves fling themselves to and fro
in the wind. The dark comes and no longer
can the leaves be seen, though they can
be heard thrashing back and forth
against each other.

DAVID IGNATOW

In Passing

With light, alert step,
he strides towards me
down the street, on his head
at a perky angle a snap brim hat.
He wears tight, modish trousers,
his legs kicking out as in parade,
a jacket neat and trim
across his shoulders.

An umbrella tightly curled
swings at his side like a baton,
with the quick, energetic motion
of his arm.

I am dressed in exactly the same style,
my color grey, his blue. His large eyes
gleam from behind his glasses, as we approach
each other in passing. His face is lined,
on his lips a short smile, as if
to acknowledge one another's thoughts:
we once were young.

MICHAEL J. KERLIN

Squaring the Circle: Catholic Universities and Free Speech

In any literate game of word association, *Catholic university* must eventually produce *oxymoron* or *contradiction* or *squared circle*. Concepts of the university as a place of unrestricted inquiry and debate and of Catholicism as a movement committed to fixed truths seem too obviously in conflict. No wonder, then, that every time a Georgetown or a Villanova or a Notre Dame encounters an academic freedom controversy, someone is bound to point out that the very idea of a Catholic University is indeed a contradiction in terms.

Surely, though, there is nothing strange about joining these concepts on the literal level. The words *Catholic* and *university* both have roots which imply universality. Although the meanings have shifted over the centuries, the emphasis on universality remains in both cases. "Catholic university" should then be more a truism than an oxymoron when one takes the term literally. What makes the Gregorian University in Rome less a university than Princeton is not its church control so much as its narrow curriculum. One need only think of Moscow State University to see that academic freedom cannot be the sticking-point. Marxism-Leninism may have hindered the development of a quality institution, but it would have to be fanciful to deny Moscow State the label *university* because the Communist Party interfered with teaching and curriculum in the name of sound ideology.

If *university* entails nothing about freedom and *Catholic* nothing about its limitation, why should joining the concepts seem peculiar? The peculiarity rests in history. Throughout the Middle Ages, when they first appeared, universities guarded their independence within society just as the city and its burghers guarded their independence from the lords of the land. Hence all the emphasis on charters which defined that independence. The struggle for autonomy lasted for centuries and continues to this day.

By the last century, with the triumph of liberalism, universities had also evolved the belief that freedom within the university was an essential condition for the pursuit of truth. As a matter of fact, although the church was an early defender of university autonomy and although some nineteenth century Catholics were liberals, the institutional Roman Catholic Church generally opposed liberals and liberalism. You need only read the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX or study the Modernist Crisis under Pius X to see how deep and vehement the opposition was. Academic freedom was not cherished, and Catholic universities were ever vigilant lest too rampant a discourse might corrupt faith and morals. After all, a freedom which undermined the true and the good could hardly be a genuine freedom.

Everyone knows how the direction changed in the 1960s with the Second Vatican Council. Conciliar documents on the church, on the modern world,

on religious freedom, and on the laity called for a more honest confrontation with problems of the age and for a more respectful dialogue with people of other faiths and persuasions. The effect of this shift on Catholic universities, especially in the United States, was immense. Faculties which had been overwhelmingly Catholic became more diverse; professors felt little threat to their tenure in challenging official church teachings; public programs included people who had made a career of challenging Catholicism at the most fundamental level. In the years immediately after Vatican II, it sometimes appeared that the Catholic universities had outstripped their secular counterparts in issues of academic freedom and open discourse.

This marriage of liberalism and Catholicism in the university appears in the 1967 Land O'Lakes Statement by American Catholic university officials and again in a more muted form at the Second World Congress of Catholic Education in 1972. Such statements from all over the world and from all levels could probably be multiplied several times. Charles Curran's recent *Catholic Higher Education, Theology and Academic Freedom* (1990) gives a good survey of these developments for any interested reader. No one should think, though, that this marriage is perfectly stable.

The 1983 Code of Canon Law still requires that teachers in Catholic Universities be distinguished by doctrinal integrity and uprightness of life and that "those who teach theological subjects in any institute of higher studies must have a mandate from competent ecclesiastical authority." Obviously principles such as these allow for interference in the internal life of Catholic universities, and a 1985 "Proposed Schema for a Pontifical Document on Catholic universities" would have reinforced the potential for interference.

The proposed schema encountered so much opposition from bishops as well as academics that it never became effective. What Pope John Paul II promulgated instead was the Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990), which illustrated the tension between liberalism and Catholicism. While it is on the whole a positive, optimistic proclamation of the place of Catholic universities in the life of the church and of society in general, it contains troublesome qualifications for many American Catholics.

The very clause which proclaims that "every Catholic university...possesses that institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively and guarantees its members academic freedom" leads into the qualification "so long as the rights of the individual and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good." Although the qualification may seem innocent, it is loaded with the potential for conflict.

Even, if we knew nothing about these official texts, we could not help noticing how unsettled the issue of liberalism/Catholicism is in Catholic culture and on Catholic campuses. The faculties grow ever more diverse, and normally it seems as though Catholic university professors can say whatever they choose without anxiety about reprisals. University and departmental programs at the Notre Dames are, in most respects, as wide-ranging and challenging as anywhere else. But all the while Vatican officials prepare oaths for professors in sensitive disciplines; and the same officials make eminent theologians like Hans Kung and Charles Curran *causes celebres* by declaring them "no longer Catholic theologians" and by forcing them out of teaching positions.

Often the problem has been not who should teach or write, but who should be invited to speak on campus. Thus a scholar like Daniel Maguire of Marquette University has been in effect blacklisted from lecture programs on Catholic campuses because of his well-publicized positions concerning birth control and abortion. The effectiveness of this blacklisting became evident when four institutions cancelled contracts for talks by Maguire in the single summer of 1985.

In 1990 La Salle University had the embarrassment of inviting Linda Wharton of the Women's Law Conference to speak within the university-sponsored Concert and Lecture Series on the theme "Preserving the Right to Choose after Webster" and then cancelling the lecture under internal and external pressure. A still more recent instance involved the Vatican's vetoing an honorary degree for Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. The degree would have celebrated Weakland's role in developing the American pastoral on economics, but the church authorities cited his conciliatory approach on abortion in blocking the conferral. Discourse obviously has its limits even after Vatican II: the circle has not been squared.

No doubt there are different questions here. What can teachers teach? What can scholars publish? Who should be invited to speak? Who should get an honorary degree? I subtitled this essay "Catholic Universities and Free Speech" because I wanted in fact to write not just about what professors should do in or out of the classroom, but also about the breadth of discourse which might take place on a Catholic campus. Not just about our Hans Kungs or Charles Currans, but about who gets to talk and about what, about the whole intellectual life of the institution.

I want to argue that this intellectual life should be diverse—even perhaps contentious and that it should involve hearing occasionally from people who say what the Catholic Church takes to be false and evil. My claim is that a Catholic university in the strong sense (that is, one composed of many Catholics convinced that the world is cared for, that Jesus is the sign of that care, and the church is the instrument of that care) should not be a place of restricted discourse, but one of broad discourse. It can and should be strongly liberal as well as strongly Catholic.

I shall use the abortion controversy as my context since it is the most evident and painful point of conflict right now. My personal beliefs are more pro-life than pro-choice. Yet it is precisely from the likes of Daniel Maguire and other opposed thinkers that I would like us to hear on this issue. In *On Liberty* (1859), John Stuart Mill took the position that people should be allowed to think, to say and to do anything not harmful to others; and, although he says "allowed," the gist is that they should be positively encouraged. The whole society will grow richer in every way if liberty reigns.

Saying is the critical part here. Mill gave three reasons for encouraging wide-open discourse: that a seemingly offensive position might indeed be the truth, that it might contain some valuable partial truth, and that the truth itself pales when it does not come through combat with even outrageous error. Perhaps we might put the first reason aside in our strong Catholic university based as it is on a set of convictions which includes the idea of ecclesiastical infallibility. I shall suppose then that the central Catholic positions cannot

be proven false, although we all recognize that many things we believe to be central now may someday no longer seem so, and that actual issues of controversy are rarely at the center of faith and morals.

But even those who "possess" an unshakable hold on the truth will recognize that we can learn much from those who don't have it as fully as we do. We don't discuss with Lutherans, Jews or Marxists just to be nice or to share our vision, but also to learn from them, that is, to get to see the world, life, ourselves in some measure as they do. Popes and bishops sit down with pastors, rabbis and commissars with the notion that these persons have something to convey about the world, about God, about Jesus and so on. Universities enlarge and enrich their staff, their curriculum, their programs with the same motivation.

How does this openness extend to the abortion controversy? I agree with the official church that abortion is always homicide. Nonetheless, I know that we Catholics (pope, bishops, professors and so on) have something to learn from listening to and talking with the pro-choice side of the abortion debate. If nothing else, we can learn why intelligent and moral people often think differently from other intelligent, moral people. We can thus learn something about women's autonomy, about privacy, about sexuality, about the dilemmas people face, about public policy.

Above all, about public policy. Most of the people who argue for the pro-choice position do not argue for it because they advocate abortions; but rather because they oppose legislation to outlaw abortions. On this prudential matter, there is simply no clear guidance from Catholic Christian teaching or tradition, anymore than there was clear guidance about the handling of the slave trade in the 18th and 19th centuries. Although I myself favor in principle the sort of legislation recently passed in Pennsylvania, Utah and Louisiana to restrict abortion, I do so hesitantly because I do not know its effects on human beings, born or unborn. Neither does anyone else. Once again, we need to keep talking to people on all sides if we are to evaluate the legislation; and, if we don't talk to each other in universities, we shall do so noplacé.

Mill's third argument concerned the importance of opposition for achieving, holding and deepening knowledge once we have achieved it. First of all, struggle is the normal path to truth; and, if we don't work through the struggle, we usually don't understand the truth we hold. That is why outlandish philosophers make the best pedagogical foils and why the great heresies can help us make sense of Christological dogmas.

When we ignore or silence the opposition successfully, the truth becomes a matter of rote and soon loses its meaning. More often, we silence the opposition only in the *official* sides of discourse (no courses, no teachers, no lectures of that persuasion), but the debate goes on unofficially but to the advantage of the silenced positions. *The Index of Forbidden Books* made the forbidden books, primarily in philosophy and theology, attractive in a way unthinkable nowadays when the index is no longer in effect. I sometimes wish that Descartes and Kant were still *verboten* so that I could get the students to read and discuss them behind my back. Now they are just "school."

Honesty requires that I note one good effect in attempts to stifle debate in an academic environment: frequently the level of controversy heightens and that the issue gets better discussion than ever before. Let me use the Wharton example at La Salle University as an example, since I experienced the developments first hand. Normally such a lecture would have small attendance from faculty and students alike. The cancellation changed everything. Within a couple of weeks a hundred faculty assembled for a heated debate. The school paper was full of articles, editorials and letters on the matter. An alternative program organized by students had standing room only. And, on a more personal plane, I was able to cover Mill's *On Liberty* that semester as something other than an academic exercise. The whole business actually enriched the life of the university. Unfortunately the pro-life movement itself lost credibility among students since it seemed to triumph by intimidation rather than by discussion. People with imagination would have foreseen the consequences in any university.

At this point, though, my argument must take a different tack. The basis for Mill's liberalism is utilitarianism, that is, the belief that a free society is more prosperous materially and spiritually in the long run. Catholic Christians have, of course, a deeper motivation for encouraging conversation and listening even to their enemies. They have the conviction that every human being is a child of God and washed in the blood of Jesus. As such, every human being deserves love and respect in his/her full humanity, which means in his/her ability to think, to argue, to decide. We as Catholics owe it to our faith to listen to pastors, rabbis, commissars—even to dissident Catholics— not just because we may get some insight from them but because we value them as people.

That is a principal motive of the whole ecumenical movement within and without the church. One might note the line about pastors in *Gaudium et Spes: The Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the Modern World*: "By unrelenting study they should fit themselves to do their part in establishing dialogue with the world and with men of all shades of opinion." Surely the recommendation must apply to universities, their administrations, faculties and students as well. In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, John Paul II makes this ecumenical task an important part of the Catholic university mission. It is a task which will get us talking across lines—even about abortion.

In fact, we can't separate out the beliefs of Lutherans, Jews, Marxists and dissidents about abortion from their views about God, Jesus or the church. Not surprisingly, the rabbi at my local reform synagogue does not take Jesus to be the messiah. He bases that position on his own analysis of life, of history and of the Jewish tradition. If we invite him to speak about Judaism before a Catholic university audience, we might expect him to tell us of his position and to argue for it. It also happens that he does not see the pro-life position in its most prominent features as consistent with Reform Judaism. If we invite him to talk as a Reform Jew, we should expect him to take and defend a stance contradictory to the present teaching of pope and bishops. Something similar can be said about Protestant communities in my neighborhood and maybe also about dissident Catholics. If we respect these people, we should be willing

to listen to them; and, if we don't listen to them, it shouldn't be surprising that they don't listen to us. Respect breaks down all around.

Of course, I have been writing about an ideal university which is *strongly* Catholic and *strongly* liberal. Making it a reality is more difficult. First of all, very few people (and consequently very few institutions) ever manage to be consistently liberal. Catholics are not alone in having trouble. We know the problems of schools affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Church of the Latter Day Saints. And even non-Christians have limits. A while back one friend told me of a Philadelphia rabbi booed by his congregation on Yom Kippur for making conciliatory comments about the Palestinian problem. One would sympathize with the rabbi trying to hold his congregation together just as one may sympathize with the university president trying to please his various constituencies. Few among us want our administrators to commit institutional suicide in the name of high principle.

You might say that such examples are but further evidences of human intolerance, but we can all think of instances when liberalism not only does but should have limits. Who wants lectures anywhere entitled "Protecting slavery after the fourteenth amendment" or "Controlling Jews after Nuremberg"? The lectures would be socially inflammatory, and they contradict what I take to be genuine moral perceptions. In a certain sense the topics are unspeakable. Good sense might suggest that we permit little groups of students or faculty to entertain the issues and that we not punish faculty members who propose the theses in class. But I would not give them the encouragement of a podium or a stipend.

Why are my rabbi's views on Jesus or on abortion any different? All that I can say is that, although these views cause me problems, I find responsible, intelligent people all around me who hold them. I know we need to deal openly and publicly with these views and these people. I can't say the same thing for the advocates of slavery or anti-semitism. So I allow for a lecture entitled "Jesus: Christ of the Gentiles but not Messiah of the Jews" or "In Defense of Abortion Rights" and not for "Protecting slavery after the fourteenth amendment" and "Controlling Jews after Nuremberg." How my list of speakables and unspeakables may develop in the future I cannot say: moral perceptions are unpredictable.

Frankly, we should not have to fret much about the unspeakables on any level in the sort of university I have been advocating. If Christianity and Catholicism permeate the intellectual life of the institution, we shall not have to worry that someone may occasionally get a stipend to pull in the other direction. But then our programs and above all our faculty shall require much attention. My deepest worry is that existing Catholic universities will progressively lose the possibility of being strongly Catholic and strongly liberal because they will no longer have a core of faculty who take the conjunction seriously. Anyone who doubts that it is a problem should go to a meeting of the American Philosophical Association looking for prospective instructors who are at the same time convinced Catholics and open-minded philosophers. They are *aves rae*. What one encounters more often are young academics who respond to the question "How do you see yourself contributing to a

pluralistic department in a Catholic university?" with the opening words, "Well, I was raised Catholic...." If it is hard to find the people who can populate a school or a department where the issue is taken seriously, then it must be nearly impossible elsewhere.

It should be a matter of rejoicing that for now there remain enough birds of this feather in many places to keep the hope for my model Catholic university alive. Their presence there makes the controversies described here possible because in them the mix of liberal and Catholic values are real enough to provoke a clash. Catholic and non-Catholic alike need to give some thought to how we can maintain the mix into the twenty-first century. As I observed earlier, Catholic universities have to reflect much harder on their programs and on their faculty if they are not someday to bear the label *Catholic* without a reality underneath. That endeavor alone will create some tension with liberalism, but the tension is not a contradiction. In the absence of the Catholic reality, we might indeed have liberal universities, even more liberal ones, but they would not be the sort of institutions I have sketched, where the emphasis on freedom and discourse stems from a peculiarly ennobling vision of people and their worth. The loss would, I think, be a misfortune for church and society.

In any event, the efforts of a school won't be enough if the universal church has indeed lost a generation of intellectuals. Then the church itself, from us up and from the pope down, *will have to* consider a more positive relationship with academe and with intellectuals. Although *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* goes a great distance in this direction, the repressive moves I cited earlier are discouraging and counter-productive. The discouragement may have something to do with the near disappearance of the young Catholic intellectual who takes Catholicism and liberalism seriously. Those of us who do take them seriously cannot afford to wait. We must take up the impossible task of squaring the circle.



JOANNE GROWNEY

A Mathematician

Ah, you are a mathematician,
 they say
 with fear or admiration
 or an embarrassed giggle
 or with disdain.

And, they say,
 You must be able –
 I could use you –
 To balance the checkbook.

I think about my checkbook.

Yes,
 I can balance it.
 Once in a while
 I do balance it,
 Just like sometimes
 I dust the top shelves,
 A finicky thing
 That I sometimes do
 To punish myself
 Because too much of me
 is a mathematician
 And not enough
 is a poet,
 Because I seek precision
 at beauty's expense.
 But I repent of that:
 here I am.

I think I shall never see
 a number as lovely as a daffodil,
 unless it is ten,
 the number of my fingers on which I count
 all other numbers,
 unless it is seven,
 the number of days of creating, including the day
 of blessing and rest,
 unless it is four,
 the number of my children,
 unless it is one,
 the number of all together.

I think that I shall never see
 a poem as beautiful as one.

A Story by

THOMAS E. KENNEDY

Unjust and Deceitful Men

Jack Honicut was pleased. He had earned his bourbon. He had just caught ninety-five thousand dollars of residual grant from being sucked back by H.E.W. He sat at his desk, looking out the large, curtainless window over the miniature green trees and roadways, the toy cars and buses of Central Park. The office was quiet, sleepy in the evening sunlight which bathed the huge faces of the buildings on Fifth Avenue with a calm orange light.

He yawned and licked the drops of bourbon off his moustache, smiled lazily and sucked the slushy remnant of whiskey from his glass.

Downstairs, Central Park's dusky green trees lured him through the gate. The sun cast long shadows on the deserted path as he strolled crosstown toward his bus stop in the leafy air. A figure appeared around a curve in the path: a young man wearing a hound's-tooth suit, tall and narrow-faced with skin the color of a dusty aubergine, muttering, "Scuse me," and Honicut stopped and smiled, the smile of the liberal for the oppressed.

"Yes?" he asked.

The young man's hand emerged from his pocket. A blade leapt forth with a silken click. "See you wallet." The voice was quiet in the gathering dusk. The lines of his nose had an almost baby-like delicacy to them, and an intricate pink scar was stitched into the blackness of his upper lip. Honicut stared at the blade. The cutting edge was nicked as an old tooth, but the point was sharp, the blade long enough to reach into his heart.

"What the hell," he heard himself say, wondering at the strangeness of his words.

"Just see you wallet and I'm gon' let you go," the young man said.

Dimly Honicut sorted through alternatives: Run. Yell. Put up your fists.

"I say, see you wallet, man."

Honicut looked at the young man's eyes. Instantly they began to smolder. Hatred surfaced on the boy's face with an intensity that made Honicut obey. He took out his wallet, a sleek, black leather billfold which had cost him fifty dollars.

"Now open it can I see what you got." All caution was gone from his voice; now he was condescending.

Honicut peeled open the billfold, and the young man plucked out the bills. There seemed something vaguely sexual about it: the surrender, the strange fingers taking liberties. Perhaps the young man felt the same, for abruptly something changed, steps were skipped. His eyes smoldered again. He was inflamed.

"Fuckin' faggot," he snarled, but an instant's pause was followed by another change of tactics. Slyness oozed across the unintelligent face. "Say, you got

the time?" he asked, as casually as if they had slipped back to the beginning again. "What time you got? See you watch."

Honicut ran. His watch was worth a small fortune. A tenth anniversary present from his wife, it was mounted on a St. Gaudin gold piece. So he ran, realizing how slapstick comic he must appear, grey suit tails flying, pudgy functionary buttocks flopping, maroon tie fluttering over his shoulder. He thought the kid was on his heels, about to leap on his back, claw his hair, stab wet red holes in Regent's Street flannel. The path inclined upwards. When he reached the height of the incline, he spun, prepared to kick the kid in the teeth, but the hound's-tooth suit was disappearing in the opposite direction, hurrying off in a stiff-legged gait, blending into the dusk.

The Bayside express bus hummed over the gratings of the 59th Street Bridge, leaving Manhattan behind, its jumbled tall oblongs dark against the darkening sky. The river was black and red, swirling past the monolithic U.N. Secretariat. At this time of evening the bus was nearly empty.

What's the point, he thought. You go down, sit around in the station house, talk to a cop who hunts and pecks out your story, sign the form, waste time, and they'll never get the guy. Already the image of the young man's face had blurred. The entire incident was fading, like a dream. An excitement to preserve it rose in him. He looked at the other passengers around him: a man in a suede jacket with a grey attaché case open on his lap; two women talking, one in a red cloth coat, the other in blue. He felt like telling them: *Guess what? Just got mugged.* Then he realized that he wanted to tell it to authenticate it. Then it would be real, and he would have to ask himself why it happened, why had he let it, why had he done nothing? He felt puzzled and embarrassed. He began to review the details of what had happened, but found himself revising and rearranging and expanding and quickly gave it up to avoid the further disgrace of lies.

A tinfoil wrapped plate containing his dinner jiggled over a pot of boiling water on the stove. Mary Lee, lean and freckled with invisible eyebrows and red-blond hair, said, "God, there was a show on Channel Thirteen about what some of the drug companies are doing in, uh, India I think it was, or Pakistan. They sell drugs that they're not allowed to sell here cause of side effects. Dangerous drugs, and they just sell them without a word about the danger. I mean, famous companies. Can you imagine? How do people sleep at night?"

Honicut grunted. He was sitting at the kitchen table with a double bourbon, his second, in a Waterford rock glass. The children were asleep. He splashed some more bourbon into his glass.

"Anything wrong?" Mary Lee asked in a tone that could become aggressive. She peeled the foil off his dinner and lifted it with a pot holder, setting it down in front of him. "Watch the plate. It's hot."

"Watch the plate," he mimicked nasally. "It's hot."

"What's wrong with you?" she asked with a flat emphasis on the last word which suggested that *he* was what was wrong with him.

"What's wrong with you," he mimicked, raising his upper lip, and poured more bourbon. She watched him, her lips parted in confusion, face tilted to understand. Perversely, he let her suffer. But she quickly lost interest in the game. She snorted and turned from him and walked out of the room, turning the tables, turning his petty pleasure to loss. Now if he wanted sympathy, he would have to beg for it.

He had one more drink in the living room, alone, sitting in his leather chair within the yellow circle of light from his mahogany floor lamp. The feel of leaded crystal against his palm was substantial and comforting. He gazed across the expanse of the Chinese carpet to the wall of pine book shelves. The Great Books of the Western World, all of them, in identical bindings, occupied the top shelf. Beneath that, a row of Heritage Club books his father had been fond of. Leather-bound Romantics and Victorians. Milton. *Les Pensées*. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Descartes. Aquinas. Slipped in between a red-spined *Crime and Punishment* and a *Lord Jim* bound in blue sail cloth was a tiny black volume which he recognized as his *Father Steadman's, Sunday Missal*, which had been blown out of the water by Vatican II. *Introibo ad altare Dei. Ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam. I will go to the altar of God. To God the joy of my youth.*

His eyes drifted away from the multi-colored book-spines to the window, through whose gauze curtain he could see the lawn, the candelabra shape of the pear tree, the forsythia's yellow glow, the mossy ledge of yew hedges. The lawn was well lit by the coppery light from an almost other-worldly tall metal streetlamp, but it occurred to him that someone crawling along the base of the yew hedges would not be visible. *From unjust and deceitful men deliver me; decide my cause, O Lord, against an unholy people.*

In the sloping space beneath the basement staircase was a barrel, from the mouth of which jutted a hockey stick, a rusty putting iron, a couple of stickball bats and a Louisville slugger with black static tape wound round its handle. He hefted the bat, swung once.

He carried it upstairs behind his leg. His wife was reading in bed, leaning on her elbow, her back to him. She was reading John Updike. As he stood there it occurred to him that were Mary Lee to turn she might be frightened to see him there with the bat behind his thigh. The image made him smile. He pictured himself going, *O, sweetheart*, in a crazy cooing voice, *Did you say your prayers, sweetheart? See her turn and look at him there with the bat, see her eyes get big, her mouth drop open, her tongue warble like a reed as she screams.* He had to hold his breath to keep from giggling. Hysteria. Then an image came to him in which he raised the bat and... At once he cleared the image from his mind and quietly placed the bat under the edge of the bed where he could reach it quickly if he had need of it.

Walter Larue paused, mouth opened to bite his roast beef on a roll, and looked at Honicut. "You got *what*?"

"Mugged," Honicut repeated, withholding his annoyance.

"Black?"

He nodded.

"Goddam niggers." Larue was a blond, square-jawed, horn-rimmed New Mexican. His soft and precise enunciation of the slur was disconcerting. "You put up a fight at all, Jack?"

Honicut shrugged. "The guy had a knife."

Larue shoved out the wet pink part of his lower lip. "Couple of them tried to get me once, when I was a kid, running my paper route. Come at me on collection day. They had a knife too, and I was just a little skinny runt. Well, I started bawling all right, but damned if I gave those coons a red *cent*."

The Merchant's Gate at the northeast corner of Columbus Circle was a den of thieves: beggars, panhandlers, butt-moochers, muggers in mufti, guys in gunky slacks and spattered shoes who drank from pint bottles wrapped in brown paper bags. As Honicut stood outside his office on the elevated plaza of the Gulf & Western Building, surveying them, he felt like a traveller in time looking into the past. He might as well be looking at pirates and highwaymen and slaves. He sorted through the milling anarchy of bums and creeps and winos for a hound's-tooth suit. Nothing. On the other side of the Circle, in one of the Coliseum's recessed doorways, about a dozen bums with faces the color of the ashy dirt on the bottom of a shoe were singing in flat, ragged unison, "God didn't make little green apples and it don't rain in" under the conduction of a young blond bum whose face was sketched with dark red boils and wispy pale hairs.

The elevated plaza on which he stood was like the bridge of a ship. The mast rising from the center of the Circle was the stone pedestal on which the statue of Columbus stood. The prow of the ship coursed down the waters of Eighth Avenue between massage parlors and pawn shops and disco joints and rubble lots. And these miserable wretches on either edge of the Circle, what were they? The oarsmen below decks? Barnacles on the hull? Seagulls screaming for waste? Sharks? Offal? Living nightmares? Hallucinations? Devils? The weak? The beaten? The losers? The damned? The unclean?

The wind was screeching, beating at the windows. The ventilator screen on which the bedroom window sat was sucked away. He lunged to catch it, sticking his arm out into the storm, and an iron hand leapt forth in the darkness to grasp his wrist. He cried out, "Daddy! Help me!" and opened his eyes to grin with manic relief that it had only been a dream.

Walter Larue, wearing a mustard tweed jacket and open raincoat with dangling belt, stopped on his way out to look in at Honicut, who sat in his own visitor's chair reading, with one foot on the rim of his wooden wastepaper pail.

"Found a fitting project for that residual yet?" Larue asked.

Honicut looked up over his reading glasses. "That's tonight's objective," he said, gesturing to the stack of reports on his desk. "Any suggestions?"

"Now you mention it: how about a nutrition conference? In, say, Rio? February."

Honicut snorted. "Right. Fat Tuesday. You wouldn't care to participate?"

"Just might," Larue said, grinning. And started off, but glanced back to fire a manicured index finger through the door at him. "You watch out for the coons now, Jack." Honicut listened to his rubber heels squeaking away along the linoleum tiles of the corridor and glanced at the wall clock: six-fifteen. He chucked the report he had been reading onto his desk and went to the window. The sidewalks of Columbus Circle and Seventh Avenue were draining of the last of the people leaving office buildings and shops to enter the three subway mouths visible from where Honicut stood behind his window glass. In half an hour, the city would be quiet, empty, deserted by all except those who rode in taxis and those who prowled on foot. His palms were moist, his breath uneven. He looked at the clock, his desk, the reports stacked in a lopsided teetering pile on his green blotter. He looked at his attaché case and at the streets below. Half a dozen men were grouped around a bench at the corner of the park, milling about, each holding a bottle in a paper bag. Abruptly, Honicut grabbed up his attaché case and laid it open on his desk. He stacked the reports into it, shoving them about to make them fit, then snapped the case shut, tore his raincoat from the hanger behind his door, and hurried to the elevator.

There was a knocking at the door. A man stood there, waiting, and his passive stance was incongruous with his appearance. He had an Iroquois haircut and a dungaree vest with no shirt on underneath. His body was thick and muscular, his eyes small and black as a squirrel's, his mouth little and hard, his bald scalp flinty. Honicut began to sweat. He was on his knees peering through the mailslot. He decided to crawl into the living room to telephone the police, but as his eyes became accustomed to the dark, he saw the living room was full of silent, motionless men, spaced apart in the darkness, like a forest at night.

He set his drink down on the basement work table, crystal on plywood, and surveyed the peg board wall plate. A bright steel claw hammer with a black rubber haft caught his eye. He hefted it. There was also a pen knife and a hunting knife in a beige leather sheath embossed with the head of an Indian. But he didn't see himself with a knife, or a gun either. A gun he feared he might actually use and a knife he was pretty sure he couldn't bring himself to use. But a hammer: you could just wield it, brandish it, scare him off.

Upstairs in the cloak closet he found a canvas shoulder bag with a couple of outside pouches, one of which was perfect for the hammer. With the bag on his left shoulder, the hammer rested just forward of his armpit, just where he could reach and draw it out. Cock it back: *Shove off, wiseguy*. He locked himself into the bathroom and practiced in front of the full length mirror, but he felt slow, sluggish, as if he were moving underwater, telegraphing a mile away.

The naked man in the mirror had changed. Honicut hadn't taken a good look at him in ten years. The arms lacked definition. The middle bulged. The pectorals sagged beneath a mat of black-grey hair. Clumps of fat bulged over the kidneys. The legs were soft. Everywhere was soft and doughy. Tentatively he poked his gut with the tips of his fingers. *Pain*. Just from a little poke. An

actual punch would double him up like a jackknife. There was a smell, too. Something like fat, like warm butter. Cloying. A smell of softness.

In the space behind the furnace room were a rusty, sleeveless twenty-pound bar and a bunch of wrought iron plates that had once been painted metallic blue and were now flaked with rust. He bolted two twenty-pound plates onto the bar, locked the collars, and started curling, snorting through his nostrils to rid himself of that faint, cloying smell.

He was crawling on his belly to the phone, a slow night crawl. On the Chinese carpet was a shoe, two shoes. Someone was standing there. The shoe smelt of dog dirt. The room was full of silent men, immobile in the dark, spaced like trees in a forest. Honicut crawled backwards from the room, but they were in the hall as well, and in the dining room and kitchen. Everywhere he looked, the entire house was a dark forest of silent men.

He sat at the window wrapped in a blanket, waiting for dawn. It came like blue metal. The lawn and streets and road glinted harshly with it, wetted down from the night's rain. Mary Lee was snoring delicately beneath the humped up bed covers. He felt he ought to go down in the basement and lift weights, but his temples pained from lack of sleep, and his stomach burned with acid, and a rancid fatty smell teased at his nostrils, and he hadn't the will to rise from the chair.

Honicut hated the guy on sight. He was not tall, but heavy-set and swarthy, and the pits of his cheeks were stippled with a residue of adolescent acne. He wore a purple athletic club jacket with yellow piping, and he had a tough, lean mouth set in a smirk of self-absorbed impatience. Cocky. He stepped out of a doorway on Fifth and 43rd and blocked Honicut's path. "Hey, buddy, I'm in a spot," he said with a perfunctory grimace of apology. "I'm from Camden, you know? Joisey? And I lost my wallet. I need a buck fifty-seven for the bus ticket home."

"Get a job," Honicut said, the words deep in his throat, almost pulled back, but spoken nonetheless. He went to step around the guy, who moved to block his way again, brow knitted. "The fuck you say to me, scumbag?"

Honicut tried to sneer, but felt his mouth twist into a kind of lopsided grin. His heart lurched and began to bang against his ribs. He was trembling. "Live off your own lunch," he muttered and walked swiftly out into the street between two parked cars and moved away rapidly, not turning as he heard the guy call after him.

"Break your fuckin' face for you, scumbag!" The anger in the voice seemed to be feeding upon itself, and Honicut walked more quickly, expecting a sudden attack, but as he turned the corner, he glanced back to see the guy stopping another man. He exhaled a long, ragged breath and leaned against a red brick wall. His right hand was trembling uncontrollably, and his knees felt as though they were packed with water. He found himself thinking about going back, drawing out the hammer and going back and challenging the creep. But he knew that he would only consider that as long as he was so far away; he knew he would not go back, and the knowledge disgusted him. He

stopped at the first bar he came to and ordered a double bourbon, but only after the second double did his hand stop trembling.

They were waiting outside, under the tall metal streetlamp. They stood in straight lines, rank after rank of them, all the same: Iroquois haircuts and naked muscular torsos; they wore leather thongs round their biceps and had rings in their ears and held knives and clubs.

Honicut's oldest son's bicycle was exposed in the driveway, its trim golden lines gleaming in the moonlight. There was nothing to do, but go out and save it. He could barely move, his legs did not function. He hoisted the bike to his shoulder by the crossbar, but fell down the basement steps with a rush of wind. In the basement a man with acne scars and thick lips and swollen beefy fists was sitting on Honicut's workbench, holding Honicut's Waterford crystal rock glass. Honicut opened his mouth to shout, "Put that down, you bum!" but no sound emerged from his throat. They had cut the cords. The bum grinned maliciously, raising the crystal to his thick yellow lips.

Honicut woke muttering, twitching, dried sweat itching across his back. He opened his eyes, then closed them and slept again, entering a dream too deep and complex to be brought back to consciousness.

The man in the mirror was changing again. He began to look more like a man.

The forearms were taut, even dangerous. They could lock around a throat. The shoulders could put beef into a punch. His pectorals were hard and his belly, while not yet flat, was taut; it could absorb punishment. To prove it, he punched himself as hard as he could with his right fist, just beside the navel. He grunted. It hurt, but he didn't fold. He could take it. That's what counted. He would soon be ready. Soon he would feel safe again. The smell of fear would leave him and he would be as before. They wouldn't see each other anymore, these men and himself. He would be free of them. The smell would leave him, and they would step away again, and the normal distance would return. After all, he was a busy man. It wasn't right that he should have to use so much time and energy on this, on people like this.

Crossing Central Park South with his morning coffee in a styrofoam container, his shoulder bag looped onto his left shoulder, Honicut noticed a man standing at the curb on the other side, as though waiting to cross, but the light was green, and he only stood there, looking or seeming to look at Honicut, as if waiting for him to home into the curb. He was wearing a brown leather jacket which had tatters of thread where the buttons should have been and black slacks, streaked across one thigh with some white gunk. His skin was red and raw, and his eyes had a hard, mindless look to them, small and black like a squirrel's. Honicut's heart jerked. He snapped his fingers and did an about face, feeling sweat spring out on his back, feeling those little black squirrel eyes behind him, fumbling his coffee container into his left hand to

reach with his right into the shoulder bag. His palm found the rubber haft, but was trembling so he wasn't sure he had the strength to wield it.

From behind him a voice drawled, "Hey, dude." He kept moving. "Hey, dude, you! You know I'm talkin' to you."

Honicut cut across the pedestrian strip and dodged out into the traffic circle which surrounded the statue of Columbus. Then he stopped. *Don't run*, he thought. *You run from dogs, they chase you*. A taxi beeped and bore down on him. He got trapped on the white line between two lanes of traffic. Horns blared. A face leaned out of a blue Pinto van and shouted, "Jerkl" The guy in the leather jacket stood in the middle of the crossing, glaring at him. Honicut glared back.

"What am I?" he yelled across the lane of traffic separating them. "Hah? A mark? Hah?" He was ready now. He could feel he was ready if he had to be. He stood there, pinned between the two lanes of traffic, the statue of Columbus behind, this narrow-eyed creep in the leather jacket facing him, and he was ready. "I've had a-fucking-nough!" he yelled across the traffic. "You hear me?" People were stopping on the pavement to stare.

A bus stopped with a wheeze of airbrakes, and the black driver stuck his head out the window to shout, "Get out my face!"

Honicut drew the hammer and held it up over his head. A taxi braked. He ran past it toward the crossing. The guy in the leather jacket took several steps back, leaning backwards. Honicut, running, decided he would have to hit him. The head. But the guy scabbled backwards and sideways to the curb, yelling, "You crazy fucker! This man is *in-sane*." He spun and began walking swiftly away, and Honicut stood there in the crossing wielding the hammer.

"Come back here and let me crack your skull for you!"

The guy stopped and turned back, and they faced each other across a thirty yard path left open by the onlookers. Honicut felt his fear returning. His left hand hurt, and he glanced at it to see that he was still holding the styrofoam container of coffee, but had squeezed it so tightly that the hot coffee had streamed out over his hand and soaked into the cuff of his shirt and jacket and raincoat. He walked over to a wire-mesh litter basket and pitched the container into it.

The guy in the leather jacket muttered, "Crazy fucker," again and swaggered off. Honicut was shaking. He was still mad. He didn't know if he was going to cry. He didn't know if he had won. He started staring at all the bums on the edge of the Park, the punks and bums and moochers. He glared at them and shoved the hammer back into his bag.

One tall black guy caught the stare as Honicut swaggered past and raised his head slowly, eyes narrowing. There was dignity to the movement. Honicut didn't want to face the man. He hurried away across the street, up the steps of Gulf & Western Plaza, through the glass doors, past security, to the elevators and the safety of his office.



NANCY G. WESTERFIELD

Comparative Anatomy

This lesson begins in the family room
Where we have carried the family cat to await
The veterinarian coming to put him to sleep.
Clinically, the laundry would be better
For whatever untidiness attends this death,
But even the cat would know the setting
Was less than formal, since that is where
He ate. Our own sitting to eat is postponed
Until after the small formalities we expect
Of this visit. A satchel of small-animal
Effects arrives: the stethoscope probes
The quick heart behind a foreleg; here
The lungs, here the visceral swag
From the recumbent length of him, already
Surgically mutilated: the clawless feet,
The sexless rump. The needle is upended
For assessing its cc's, fleshes itself
In abdominal folds. Invaded, he cries out,
Turns his head away from us watching
The beginning of sleep, its deepening,
Now his final forgetting to breathe.
The small formalities of his leave-taking
Are soon complete. He is composed. We can
Compare our own gross anatomies with his neatness
At rest, a last lesson in graceful retreat.

SCOTT JERMYN

A Subtle Frame

Always we try to name a thought
 For what's unnamed will swell and grow
 More slippery than what we sought
 More possible than what we know.

Therefore I tried to curb and tame
 My love in straining lines of verse,
 To hold love in a subtle frame,
 For what's unfettered must be worse

Than anything that will submit
 To verse's hard designs, the store
 Of fitter fictions I had knit,
 And so I hoped to love no more.

Or if I loved, on terms that bind
 My actions to the plans I'd drawn:
 My contracting words were all designed
 To complement content withdrawn.

No sooner were my verses done
 When at each turn each line defied
 The artifice I'd just begun
 And proved that when I wrote I lied,

For everywhere the words I wrote
 Reflected what I had contrived
 To bury in each sounding note,
 And with each word new thoughts arrived

So that I would resign my will
 To trust in verse's lesser worth
 To name love right. For all our skill
 We need new heaven and new earth

When we attempt to name fixed bounds,
 Since all we learn from what we wrought
 Is that no limit all surrounds
 And that we cannot think it naught.

JOHN FANDEL

Ablative Absolute

they having sung the obsequies,
we having prayed—upon our knees,
if you please—

she having strewn the violets,
he having dug the grave in sweats,
no regrets,

shroud of linen having been sewn,
here lies engravèd into stone,
monotone,

pine box having been made, a corse,
the body having died, of course;
no remorse.

Petrarch Speaking

Mythic Sirens *sing*, I read somewhere,
Sirens Zoological *snuffle*. Well,
it seemed to make a sonnet by Fandel
à la Arnold, proxy prosy. (There

sing lesser poets in our current air
of beaucoup snufflers.) Sniffers. You can tell,
this season of lilaceous asphodel,
O Muse, the sort Odysseus would care

to hear. (I mean of Sirens.)

Time, just now,
would profit could I hear two species, both
varieties a tribute to the world.

But, don't I, though?

O world of wrinkled brow,
the farmer's furrows! I might swear an oath
on poetry of daffodils unfurled.

FRANCIS BLESSINGTON

The Cellar

Like an abandoned shop, the room
below the kitchen silts with gloom.
Half-dug and paved only with soil,
its efforts seem half-spent: the oil
makes groan the white asbestos furnace
beside the dials of water and gas.

A quiet store of craft: the wrench,
the level, and carpenter's bench,
a table set with vise and clamps,
where mice have tunnelled from the swamps
behind the panelled, detached doors,
and gypsy spiders tent the corners.

The high, small window sends a shute
of sun that sparks the dancing motes,
which twist and loose a double helix,
and climb the closed-off wooden steps,
half-way to sun, and half from ground,
a dry and fecund start and end.

In musty smells of humid stone,
all wait the chance to rise again.

A Story by

ALYCE MILLER

Sketch

It is one of those fall nights, in between rain showers, when the sky swells up again like a sore. I open the garage door to let out the oil paint fumes which my husband is convinced will asphyxiate me one day.

I pause. The street is as quiet as expectation; the air as thick. Softly the rain makes a sound like tinsel. It polishes the tree trunks and pavement black.

Upstairs my husband and children sleep in one big bed, though the children do have their own room. My husband read about it in an anthropology book: cultures where young children and parents sleep together. Something about togetherness, building a sense of security. I have my doubts, but my husband is innovative and the kids seem to think it's great fun.

I have an internal alarm which wakes me about two thirty in the morning. Like a thief, I steal my own time to paint, when the rest of the world no longer needs me. I learned this from my mother who would stay up all night reading, so I find nothing peculiar in this habit.

During the day, while the children clamor around, I sketch them quickly in charcoal, catching their movements and expressions as best I can. But this morning I am working on a series of self-portraits that I can't seem to get right. They look forced to me, too agonized to be me. It's as if I'm painting something I can't really see, though I have a mirror right in front of me, and several photographs of myself spread out on the floor.

Then a shadow comes through the door, and I am no longer alone.

The man has short, chopped hair the color of straw, and his clothes are institutional beige, and torn. He wears no socks, just large, clown-sized black shoes that seem to belong to someone else. There are wet leaves sticking to the soles. His eyes are the color of blue water, the kind you'd find in small mountain streams before the days of pollution. What I notice last is that he carries an axe, the blade smeared with blood.

He is edgy. He won't look at me at first, but glances around the garage as if in search of something. Finally he says, "Take off your clothes."

He speaks with such authority it seems almost natural that he should ask.

"I don't think so," I say, without any of the cold clammy fear people often say they feel in a life-threatening situation. I still hold my paint brush in my hand and continue to touch its tip to the canvas.

I can smell the man from across the paint-splattered floor. In a split-second reverie I imagine my blood on the floor and the walls as well, mixed in with the paint, after he's attacked me over and over with the axe. The possibility strikes me as ironically artistic.

The man's blue eyes flash like heat lightning.

"Do what I say," is what he says.

"You know," I explain, "the reason I can't is that I'm trying to do these damn portraits and..." I look at my wrist watch..."it's already four a.m., and they wake up for school in three hours. I have very little time to work."

This is all true, and I am so desperate for this time to work that I honestly expect the man to understand.

My self-portraits are uncomfortable and maddening territory. I am not a pretty woman, and what used to be called the freckle-faced tomboy look when I was a child has not aged well. I look older than my thirty-six years; my face often looks stern when I don't intend it to. I keep looking for the softness, but I can't find it. I turn the mirror so that it picks up the reflection of the back wall instead of me.

The man is sweating profusely and breathing hard as if he's run a long distance. His clothes are wet from an earlier rain shower. His big shoes leave muddy prints whenever he moves.

I know where he's come from; a lot of them live about two miles down the road in a green building with barbed wire around it. The neighbor kids' school bus passes it daily; they call it the funny farm jailhouse.

The man swings his axe carelessly at a canvas propped against the wall and makes a huge tear down the side of my husband's face. Suddenly he is two faces, one of which droops like a tear. The man stares at it for a moment, puzzled, then turns to study another canvas: this of a drowning woman being circled by a shark with a human face. My husband has always found this one so disturbing he has asked me not to hang it in the house.

The man slashes at the shark's face. "You know I'm going to kill you."

He moves toward me, the axe swinging aimlessly through the air.

"You could sit on that stool," I suggest, pointing to it with my paint brush. "I could do a portrait of you."

I don't know why I say it, except that for a moment it seems perfectly reasonable. Later, when I will tell this story, my friends will all marvel at my presence of mind. They will want to know how I knew to say that. The more I tell the story, the smoother my reaction will appear.

The man stops for a moment. His face folds into a frown. I take down one of my awful self-portraits I have been struggling with—a haggard, lined face like my mother's peers back at me—and I bring up a fresh canvas that I have just stretched, as if for this occasion.

The idea obviously meets with the man's approval, because he backs up, without turning around, and lowers himself slowly onto the small red stool I use for my children to sit on when they have posed.

"I could chop you up with this axe," he reminds me. "I could chop your arms off first, then your legs, then your neck, so your head would scream."

He growls after he says this, swinging the axe up and over his head, then back down to the floor so that the blade strikes the cement and bounces.

"I killed three people and a dog with this axe." For some reason I think he is lying.

I screw off the cap from a tube of paint. The color is fire engine red. I show him the tube by holding it up in the air.

"Red's my favorite," he says, and begins shaking all over like a wet dog. His eyes dart around the room. "Red, like dead."

He makes a feeble lunge at me, laughing as his axe misses my leg by about a foot. I know there is still a chance he'll kill me, but somehow I don't mind yet.

I straighten the freshly stretched and gessoed canvas on the easel and look over at him, straight on, for the first time. I see the insanity in his eyes which fills me more with curiosity than fear. He cannot look at me, but instead begins to blink as if encountering a sudden bright light.

"Okay," I say, breathing in deeply, then exhaling. "You're going to have to sit very still now and be very quiet so I can work."

The room grows small and heavy with the scent of more rain. I keep expecting a car to go by, someone to see us from the open door, but we are alone. The man sits slumped on the stool, studying the blade of the axe as he turns it over and over in his hands.

I get started quickly without saying another word. There is not time to plan. I just begin to paint what I see. It is as if my fingers have had a kind of memory where he is concerned.

When I look at him again, he has laid the axe carefully across his lap. But I can smell his rank odor, and under his wet shirt his muscles are tensed.

Neither of us speaks for a long while. I hear the toilet flush upstairs and we both look up at the ceiling. I pray whoever it is won't come looking for me. I will be all right as long as none of them come.

I let my hands take over. The man's face slowly emerges from the canvas, wild, enraged. I paint exactly what I see, studying him carefully. My eye moves from the canvas to my subject and back again. I paint the unkempt tufts of hair that stand out in two places on his head. I paint the crazy light into his eyes that brings him close to sainthood. I put down on the canvas what is there before me: nothing more, nothing less. The only thing I leave out is the axe.

I am squeezing more color onto a pie tin when his voice breaks the silence.

"That's enough. It's finished," he says, jumping off the stool and coming at me.

I start to duck as he reaches out—call it reflex—but it is the painting he wants now, not me.

"You can have it," I say as if to confirm his intentions.

He moves so fast I am suddenly afraid he might use the other hand to chop me in two with the axe.

But he pauses unexpectedly and studies the painting. His face is expressionless.

"It looks just like me," he says finally. "You didn't change me one bit."

"You're welcome."

He wrenches the canvas from the easel in a violent motion. I half expect him to throw it to the ground.

But he holds it delicately like something he might care for.

"Be careful you don't smear the paint," I tell him, but it's too late. There are already two long red streaks across his beige pants.

"Fuck you," he says halfheartedly. "Remember I could kill you."

He turns around, tucking the axe under one arm, so he can use both hands to carry his painting out into the rainy night. It takes me a few moments to trust that he is gone, since he makes no noise leaving, and there is no other proof that he has left.

There is, now that I think about it, no proof that he has ever been here. But at last I get up the nerve to go to the door. I close it cautiously as if a sleeping child lies on the other side. Then I lock it with a fierce purpose.

I don't go upstairs right away. I rinse my brushes in turpentine and wipe my hands with a cloth towel I keep just for that purpose.

I look at my watch and realize the man has been here almost an hour, which seems incomprehensible. A few more minutes and the sky will begin to lighten.

I think perhaps I should call the police and tell them I've just saved my own life. There is a certain humor in that. *She couldn't paint to save her life.* I use some more turpentine to get the red paint stains off my fingers, then go upstairs to the kitchen.

My husband and children still sleep above me. I can picture them: the younger boy is nestled in the crook of my husband's arm. The four-year-old sleeps with his head at the foot of the bed.

I dial the telephone slowly, unsure of what to say.

What I manage to get out, when they answer, is something about an axe-wielding maniac who wanted to kill me.

I hardly blame the woman on the other end for asking me to repeat what I've just said—three times. When she figures out I've waited almost half an hour to call, she asks me why on earth.

I tell her about the portrait. We go back and forth on that one, and I spell the word "portrait" for her just to make sure she's got it right. Finally she says a squad car is on its way. In the meantime, she says, can I tell her which way he went.

"I gave him what he wanted," I say. "I don't know where he went next." In my mind I think of saying, *maybe to get his nails done*, but I don't for fear she will think I am the one who needs to be picked up.

She wants a description of him.

"I don't know," I say.

"But you said you just painted him." Her tone is needle sharp.

"I know, but I honestly couldn't tell you now what he looks like."

She sighs heavily on the other end.

Two uniformed officers appear at my door and I perform my citizenly duty, answering strings of questions, many of which I could respond to only with, "I don't remember."

In the end, I can see from their expressions that I have been a complete waste of their time.

Without any help from me, a second squad car picks the madman up about a mile from my house, in the woods, where he was walking along, swinging his axe. The only thing he had apparently killed was a small animal; thus, the bloody axe. Years ago, they tell me, he stabbed his grandparents to death, and then killed two more men in prison with a piece of metal.

I inquire about the painting.

"We found no painting," says one of the cops looking at the other. "But we've got the suspect. We may need to ask you more questions later."

My husband wakes up and stumbles downstairs to sit next to me on the sofa. The cop explains I have just been through a traumatic experience and he gives my husband a meaningful look.

"You're very brave," says my husband. "You obviously were able to calm the guy so he wouldn't hurt you. How did you know what to do?"

What runs through my mind is no real answer to that question. All I know is that none of them were alone with that man, none of them smelled his rage up close, none of them saw the ease with which he accepted his rightful place on the canvas. I am filled with an emotion I cannot name exactly, but it comes closest to envy.

I get up and excuse myself to lie down for a while.

To this day I don't know what became of the painting because no one ever found it. Some days later I go walking down in the woods where I think he might have dropped it, but there is no sign.

Some people, when they hear about this, obviously doubt there ever was a painting, which is why I tell this story so rarely. But there was a painting, that I am sure of. Perhaps not a particularly good painting, but that doesn't matter. What I remember, almost wistfully, is the absolute calm I felt as I painted. It's the calm that comes only when you're completely focused on something, without distraction. The world around you dissolves. They say both fear and inspiration can do that.

What everyone kept telling me is true. The painting did save my life; the man wanted me, but I gave him himself. It seemed like a fair exchange. I couldn't expect anyone else to understand that.



BARBARA DANIELS

Losing the Farm

What we had is gone, the stone porch, bright fall
loading trees with light, the sheep that blundered
through the open door. Beyond the thin wall
the old woman thumped her stick and made me wonder

how much longer she could struggle with the stairs.
In her half of the house the hall clock struck
and struck again. Outside, the sway-backed mare
bent to the grass beside a pock-marked truck.

We were all waiting. Men were cutting trees
in the old orchard, dreams that had bloomed,
bouquets of butterflies. Briskly, you shelled peas
and dropped them in a metal bowl. The doomed

farm rode in the sun of its last season.
I swam, alone, up and back, through the blue
water, watching the light, asking the reason
now can never stand against the new.

Angled bones of houses crowded on our hill.
Inside our house your flowers blazed, alive,
crimson and white on every windowsill.
You would not keep the ones that did not thrive.



Book Marks

LOUIS DANIEL BRODSKY AND
WILLIAM HEYEN

Falling from Heaven. Holocaust Poems of a Jew and a Gentle

St. Louis, Missouri: Time Being Books,
1991. 109 pp. \$15.95

Reviewed by David P. Efroymsen

It has probably been thirty years since a book of poems has affected me the way this one has. Then, a friend put Karl Shapiro's *Poems of a Jew* in my grubby hands, and something happened. Now, another friend asked for a reaction to these fifty poems, written by Brodsky, a Jew, and Heyen, a Gentle. This time something seemed to explode. These are powerful pieces, and their appearance together, between the same two covers, seems important, and somehow right.

Born in 1931, I am older than either of the two authors. Yet I was raw and young between 1939 and 1945. I "followed" the war, but cannot remember when the enormity of the Holocaust broke through to me; I was probably in my twenties. What was shocking then was the numbers. Six million. Six million Jews, *because* they were Jews. Over a million *children*. What was stunning was the arithmetic. It would be tragic if that is where things were to remain: with the arithmetic. It would be tragic if arithmetic, numbers (six million) and labels ("Jews"), were all that we could pass on to our children to remember.

Heyen and Brodsky tear the reader from abstractions to images which promise to sear, and to stay. Heyen recounts, for example, in "Men in History," his memories of German folk festivals on Long Island after the war, with "boys in *lederhosen*" and "hourly parades under the lindens," with talk and songs of practically everything. But

. . . . all those years
there was one word I never heard,
one name never mentioned.

There is a kind of terrifying irony in Heyen's "My Holocaust Songs":

Dead Jew goldpiece in German eye,
dead Jew shovel in German shed,
dead Jew book in German hand,
dead Jew hat on German head

Whether it is that shovel, and how it got into that shed, or the

248 freight cars of clothing,
400,000 gold watches,
25 freight cars of women's hair.

referred to in a traffic document (now in Berlin) signed by Commandant Franz Paul Stangl (see "The Trains"), Heyen forces us to confront it, and will not let us forget or ignore it.

The strength of Brodsky's poems lies in his ability to speak for, to dramatize, the imaginations of the victims, for example, in "Kristallnacht," and for those who would have been victims had they been born a little earlier, and in a different place, as he recounts his own memory of "Waiting for Connecting Trains, 1983."



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If Heyen's poems held me in a tighter grip, it may have been because of the opportunity to read his essay entitled "Something," which is printed in this issue of *Four Quarters*. A good deal of what lies behind and beneath these poems comes to the surface as this man, born in America in 1941 to German immigrant parents, tells us "I don't feel guilty, exactly, but I feel *something*." This "something," says Heyen, "has its own moral necessity," and "keeps me, for better or worse, from the silence I both yearn for and resist." That "something," apparently, both forced him to write, and enabled him to write with the understated power which permeates nearly every page. That "something" is certainly not primarily a German something; it is a human something which allows him to imagine the violated humanity of the victims, the distorted humanity of the perpetrators, and the strange humanity of the bystanders who re-used that no-longer-needed Jewish shovel, and slept in mattresses padded with that no-longer-growing, no-longer-graying Jewish hair. Human beings were victims, and human beings were perpetrators.

There is another "something" which bothers *me* about what happened. That it was Jewish human beings who perished, who had their children torn from them, of this we are probably sufficiently aware. But that it was *Christian* human beings who did the shooting, the gassing, the separating—of this we need to be more aware, and more appalled. It was not Christian anti-Semitism which created the Holocaust; it was largely, principally, a post-Enlightenment, nationalist, racist anti-Semi-

tism. But if the soil had not been prepared and fertilized by centuries of Christian anti-Semitism, the other kind could not have taken root. But that's another essay.

When Elie Wiesel once told an old Rebbe, a friend of his grandfather, that "what he was doing" was writing, the reproachful expression of the Rebbe seemed to demand an explanation, a defense. All he could do was to contend "that some writings could sometimes, in moments of grace, attain the quality of deeds." I hope it is not condescending to suggest that many of these poems have attained "the quality of deeds." Wiesel goes on to lament that, because of the gassing and cremation of the victims, "My generation has been robbed of everything, even of our cemeteries." "Thus," he goes on, "the act of writing is for me nothing more than the secret of conscious desire to carve words on a tombstone; to the memory of a town forever vanished, to the memory of a childhood in exile, to the memory of all those I loved and who, before I could tell them I loved them, went away." These poems add words on another tombstone, to the same memory.





Book Marks

BRUCE KUKLICK

To Everything a Season: Shibe Park and Urban Philadelphia, 1909-1976

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. 237 pp. \$19.95

Reviewed by John P. Rossi

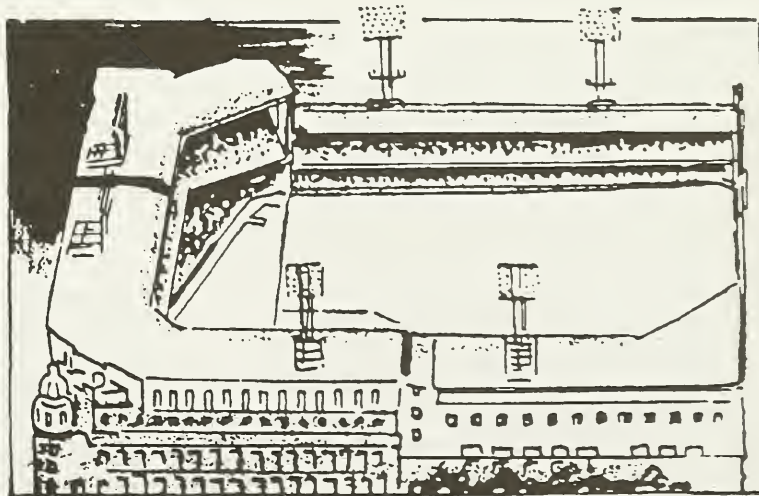
Baseball is the only American sport that has produced a serious historical literature as well as a rich body of fiction. Because of baseball's deep roots in our past it has long fascinated both scholars and sports buffs who seek to discover the game's origins, its impact on our society and the secret of its lasting appeal.

Serious scholars such as Harold Seymour, often called the Edward Gibbon of baseball, and David Voight in his magisterial three volume history of baseball since the 19th century raised the study of the sport to a major theme in American social and cultural history. In recent years biographies of Babe Ruth, John McGraw, Ty Cobb, Jackie Robinson and Casey Stengel have appeared alongside weighty monographs dealing with such esoteric themes as baseball's relationship to social mobility in America, baseball and racism and the ramifi-

cations of the game's expansion to California in the 1950s.

As a result, a student can study the interrelationship between baseball and major developments in American history in growing detail. Scholarly journals like the *American Historical Review* publish erudite examinations of baseball and Japanese society; numerous panels on baseball fiction dot sessions of MLA and the Popular Culture Association. Courses in baseball history proliferate on college campuses. Books on baseball continue to show up on the *New York Times* best seller list but instead of trashy studies of baseball's greatest games now you find first class works like David Halberstram's *The Summer of '49*.

Joining this growing list of scholarly historical works is Bruce Kuklick's *To Everything a Season: Shibe Park and Urban Philadelphia, 1909-1976*. Kuklick, a professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, traces the links be-





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tween a ballpark and the people who lived in the surrounding neighborhoods. His interest includes the locale or physical aspects of Shibe Park, how it was built, its cost, and most significantly, the impact that the ball park had on the people who lived near it and who patronized it. His book tells us much about both Philadelphia and urban America in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century.

Kuklick exams the rise of baseball in Philadelphia through the Shibe family, originally hardware merchants and eventually manufacturers of sporting goods, and their collaboration with Connie Mack and his new team, the Athletics, in the upstart American League. The Shibe brothers joined forces with Mack in 1901 just as baseball's popularity soared—attendance doubled between 1901 and 1914. The Philadelphia franchise was one of the most successful in baseball during these years, winning six pennants and three world series.

The success of the Athletics led the Shibes to decide to build a new ballpark in the heart of a large ethnic neighborhood on the fringes of North Philadelphia. The first of the concrete and steel parks, Shibe Park opened in 1909 at a total cost of \$301,000. The park was considered a gem with fine sight lines, comfortable seats, and easy access through Philadelphia's superb transportation system. The Shibe brothers wanted a ball park "for all the classes," one where people "who live by the sweat of their brow should have as good a chance of seeing the game as

the man who never had to roll up his sleeves to earn a dollar." Shibe was as good as his democratic sentiments. The ball park drew mainly middle class fans during the week but the working class predominated on weekends and holidays.

Kuklick's real interest is in showing how the ballpark became an intimate part of the lives of this largely Irish Catholic neighborhood with its smattering of Germans, Italians and Irish Protestants in the surrounding area. People in the area, mainly working class but including some lower middle class, worked at the park as ushers, attendants and cleaning crews. Businesses, especially saloons, restaurants, cigar stores and bakeries flourished in the area adjacent to the ballpark. During the season, ball players lived in the neighborhood, some in rooming houses across the street and others in rental properties in the surrounding streets.

The construction and success of Shibe Park enhanced the prosperity of the area and encouraged development of the neighborhood, which already included large churches such as St. Columba's, Freihofer's Bakery, and even a motion picture production plant called Lubinville at Twentieth and Indiana.

Kuklick sees the economic and social success of baseball and the intense loyalty of the fans as helping to create an American identity. For immigrants, adoption of baseball was a sign of becoming truly American. Baseball, Kuklick argues, also provided an es-



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cape from the drudgery of everyday life, reminded many of America's vanished (if idealized) past, and served boys as an indoctrination to manhood. Going to the game with your father or grandfather, examining the nuances of baseball and arguing the relative merits of ballplayers and teams meant admission to equality for many young boys. It was a process of acculturation as complex as any evolved by the most primitive tribe ever studied by any anthropologist.

The ballparks of early baseball — great creations of the imagination like Forbes Field, Comiskey Park, Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, Briggs Stadium, and Sportsman's Park — entered into the consciousness of fans. Their lives revolved around the ballpark and its action for six months every year. These parks were an escape from reality and the tensions of everyday life. Philadelphia was no exception in that.

Baseball and Shibe Park's hold on Philadelphia was strongest through two cycles, 1905-1914 and especially 1928 to 1932 when Mack produced one of baseball's greatest dynasties. His A's averaged 101 wins during this latter period and four players from that team were elected to the Hall of Fame — Lefty Grove, Mickey Cochrane, Al Simmons, and Jimmy Foxx.

After that it was all downhill for the Athletics and Shibe Park. The depression hit Philadelphia hard and Mack had little money to pay his star players. He had an unusual and questionable theory about baseball in Philadelphia — the fans would support a developing team

but got bored with winning. The success of Branch Rickey and the St. Louis Cardinals and Larry McPhail in Cincinnati and Brooklyn showed that careful management and imaginative ideas, like the farm system and the broadcasting of baseball, could revive sick franchises. By the mid-1930s Mack was no longer a creative student of baseball — he was living off the accumulated capital of the past. Beginning in 1933 he began selling off his stars to support the franchise. He never again was able to put together a true contender.

Matters were made worse for the Athletics when the Phillies moved into Shibe Park in 1938. By the mid-1940s they began to outdraw the A's with their exciting team, the forerunner of the pennant winning Whiz Kids. Future stars like Del Ennis, Richie Ashburn, Robin Roberts and Curt Simmons became household names around the city. Only Bobby Shantz, a talented little southpaw, was a comparable star attraction for Mack's last teams in Philadelphia. Despite some moderate success in the late 1940s the Athletics never were able to attract a million fans during their years in Shibe Park — the Phils did it twice before the A's left the city.

The experience of two-team cities in the 1950s was that the poorer franchise had to move to survive. By 1953 it was clear that the Athletics were chronically broke. Mack's two sons, Roy and Earle, squabbled over how to save the franchise. Kuklick is excellent in his discussion of the machinations between the Mack brothers and Connie's second wife to see who would control the sick



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franchise. The team and ball park were mortgaged and Roy and Earle eventually ran the franchise into the ground. The Mack family hoped that the new Democratic reform administration in Philadelphia would help save the team for the city. But a "spiritless" (Kuklick's words) Mayor Joseph Clark had no interest in sports. The team's future might have been different had the more energetic and far-sighted Richardson Dilworth been mayor.

The decline of the A's franchise paralleled the decline of the neighborhood after the second World War as the factories that employed the residents closed. Eventually the area became run-down in the mid-1950s. The fans first deserted the A's and then in the 60s despite the team's flash of success between 1962-67 they stopped attending the Phillies games. In 1969 a dull, lifeless Phillies team drew only 500,000 fans.

Shibe Park had outlived its usefulness. In the early 60s it was a rusting, run down park, dangerous to get to and poorly maintained. An era in Philadelphia history came to end with the opening of the modern and ugly, multi-purpose Vet in 1971.

Kuklick sees baseball and the fans' loyalty to its team and park as a paradigm for much that was true of Philadelphia's history. The decline of Shibe Park, the failure to preserve a once vibrant ethnic neighborhood are sad commentaries on the collapse of urban government in the middle of the twentieth century.

Kuklick believes that older Philadelphians will never be able to forget Shibe Park and its meaning to them. It was a "place where uncommon deeds gave people a sense of commonality. In this,...the game at Shibe Park rose above the flaws of its businessmen, its players and its fans." Not a bad epitaph for any ball park.

His book is not without its flaws. At times the writing is pedestrian and he makes a few factual mistakes but Kuklick has discovered a theme that baseball scholars will emulate for other cities. Books on Ebbetts Field and its impact on Brooklyn or Comiskey Field's relationship to Chicago are natural follow-ups to Kuklick's study. He can justly be proud that he was first.



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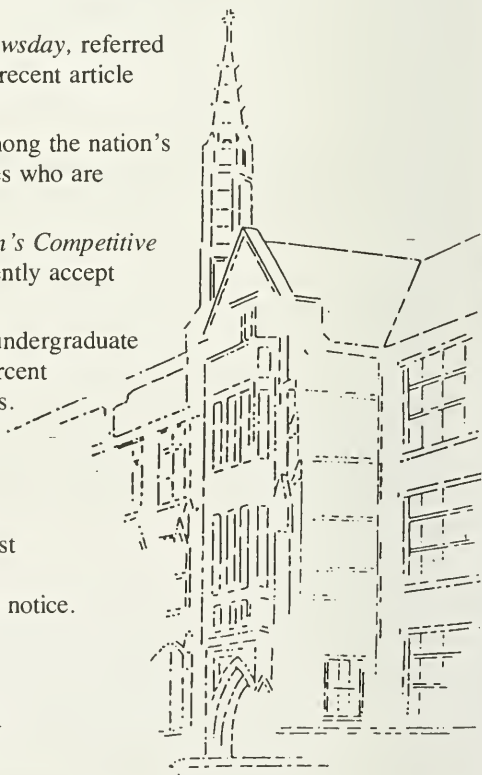


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Contributors

FRANCIS BLESSINGTON has published one book of poems, *Lantskip*. His verse translations of Euripedes' *Bacchae* and Aristophanes' *The Frogs* will appear from Crofts Classics in 1992. He currently teaches at North-eastern University.

LOUIS DANIEL BRODSKY is the author of fifteen volumes of poetry as well as nine scholarly volumes on William Faulkner. His latest book of poetry, *Falling from Heaven: Holocaust Poems of a Jew and a Gentile*, co-authored with William Heyen, appeared in April.

JOE COOGAN grew up in Philadelphia and learned to defend himself by becoming a writer. He contributed short stories to the late, lamented *Colliers*, appeared in the second issue of *Four Quarters* in January 1952, and published a novel about his Army life. In real life, he was a medical writer until his recent retirement.

An adjunct professor of English at La Salle, TAMARA CORNELISON's articles on current events in the Ukraine appear regularly in the *Ukrainian Weekly*, semi-regularly in *Our Life Magazine*, and very irregularly in *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*, a non-party newspaper published in Lviv, Ukraine.

BARBARA DANIELS teaches English at Camden County College in New Jersey. Her writing interests are varied; in addition to poetry, she has published educational materials. She is married and lives in Sicklerville, New Jersey.

DAVID P. EFROYMSON is Professor of Religion at La Salle, where he has taught since 1967. He has long been interested in Judeo-Christian relations and did his doctoral work on anti-Judaism in early Christian theology.

IRVIN FAUST is the author of six novels and two short story collections. His work has appeared in England, France, and Italy. His novel, *Willy Remembers*, has been reissued by Arbor House in its Library of Contemporary Americana series. He is the winner of two O. Henry awards.

Since retiring as Professor of English and World Literature with the college's highest honor of Professional Lecturer, JOHN FANDEL has continued to publish poetry and read in concert series. His work is reappearing in *Four Quarters* after a long absence.

JOANNE GROWNEY is a professor of mathematics and computer science at Bloomsburg University. In addition to her poetry, she has authored several mathematical articles and a mathematics textbook. She is the mother of four children.

WILLIAM HEYEN's poems have appeared in the country's most prestigious periodicals. His honors include two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in Poetry, and the Witter Bynner Prize for Poetry. His books of poetry include *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir*, *Erika:*



Contributors

Poems of the Holocaust, and *The Chestnut Rain*.

Nineteen hundred ninety-one is a busy year for DAVID IGNATOW. He has published two books, *Shadowing the Ground* and *Despite the Plainness of the Day: Love Poems*. His *Selected Letters* is due to be published next year. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association in Huntington, New York.

SCOTT JERMYN is an alumnus of La Salle who is now a graduate student in English at Duke University. This is his first published poem.

In addition to his novel, *Crossing Borders*, THOMAS E. KENNEDY has published a great deal of literary criticism that focuses on aspects of the short story. His essays, reviews, poetry, and translations from the Danish have appeared in *Kenyon Review*, *Current Literary Criticism*, and *Hollins Critic*. He lives in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he serves inter alia as European editor of *Cimarron Review*.

MICHAEL J. KERLIN is Professor and Chairman of the Philosophy Department at La Salle University. His current interest is the study of Gaelic. He has published an earlier article in *Four Quarters* dealing with Catholic Modernism.

ALYCE MILLER lives in San Francisco with her husband where she teaches and writes. She has published short fiction in *The Kenyon Review*, *Shenandoah*, and *Great River Review*. She is

currently working intermittently on two novels, one of which is based on a screenplay she wrote three years ago.

JOHN P. ROSSI continues to serve as Associate Editor of *Four Quarters*. This year he has had a reflective essay, "Looking Back on Ike" published in *The World and I*. He will read an essay this fall at the Conference on British Studies, in Tuscon, Arizona dealing with "The British View of the 1952 Election."

NANCY G. WESTERFIELD lives and teaches in Kearney, Nebraska. She has been a regular contributor to *Four Quarters* for many years and has also appeared in *The Boston Review*, *Commonweal*, and *Writer's Digest*.



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